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Peter David keeps chronicling mutant life—as well as mermaids.

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4 KILLING TIME
This Terminator tries to kill another Sarah Connor.

8 ROBIN HOOD TALES
Those merry men embark on new painted exploits.

12 SHERWOOD PLANET
The science fiction version isn't all fun & games.

17 HERO IN BLACK
Duncan Regehr makes his mark as the latest Zorro.

20 ZORRO'S HISTORY
The mythical masked man always fought for justice.

43 OK, IS PETER DAVID OVERWORKED?
He's writing about mutants & mermaids.

48 NEW VERDICTS
Judge Dredd's still the law in Mega-City One!

54 WEB IN THE WORKS
Secret agents watch over the Impact Universe.

57 JAGUAR'S TRAIL
When you find this hero, notice she's a heroine.

60 TOON LEGEND
Marc Davis animated a Disney lifetime.

FOLD-OUT SECTION
JUDGE DREDD
X-FACTOR
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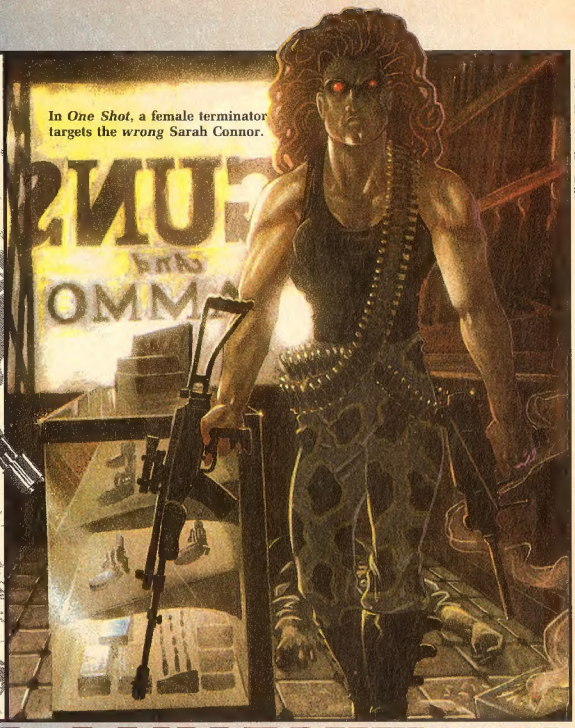


In *One Shot*, a female terminator targets the *wrong* Sarah Connor.

All One-Shot Art: Matt Wagner

All Terminator Art: Courtesy Dark Horse Comics

TERMINAL CONSEQUENCES

By ERIC NIDEROST

At first, they didn't succeed. So, those terminators are trying again & again.

Sequels aren't easy to do, especially if the parent project was enormously successful. Public expectations are raised, and inevitably, a sequel is compared to its predecessor. Whatever the medium—books, movies, TV—it's a rare sequel that lives up to the original.

Writer James Robinson knows all about these perils, because he's scripting Dark Horse's *Terminator: Secondary Objectives*, a follow-up to the first four-book *Terminator* series penned by John Arcudi and drawn by Chris Warner (CS #15). And to satisfy the seemingly insatiable demand for *Terminator* material, Robinson is also writing a separate tale appropriately titled *Terminator: One Shot*.

Of course, all this ink is being spilled thanks to the original *Terminator* movie, the 1984 hit that starred Arnold Schwarzenegger. In fact, *One Shot* is scheduled for June, with *Secondary Objectives* following as *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, the movie sequel again toplining Schwarzenegger, hits theaters this month.

Robinson is working with two artists on the *Terminator* tales, Matt Wagner on *One Shot* and Paul Gulacy on *Secondary Objectives*. The comic scribe credits Matt Wagner for getting him involved with *Terminator*. "Matt and I," Robinson explains, "have known each other for a long time. We worked on the six-issue *Grendel Tales*, and he was thoroughly acquainted with my writing. When he was offered *One Shot*, he asked me to write it, which was a great compliment."

The two *Terminator* titles are entirely separate from one another, with different plots and characters. "*Secondary Objectives*," he explains, "is a continuation of the storyline [from the first series], which was written by John Arcudi. It follows from whatever he has done. By the same token, *Terminator: One Shot* is a special that's totally independent."

After a pause, he adds playfully, "The 'one shot' of the title is a play on words; it *is* a one-shot, one-time tale. But it's also an aspect of the story."

The plot of *Terminator: One Shot* rests with a case of mistaken identity.

To wit, a terminator goes after the *wrong* Sarah Connor. The way Robinson tells it, *One Shot* is a prequel to the first film, in that it begins shortly before Schwarzenegger's character takes his time trip to our present.

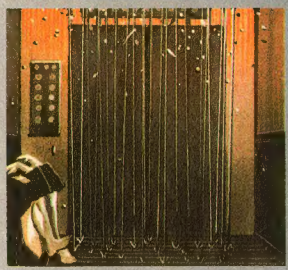
"This other terminator," Robinson details, "is a female, sent back moments before Schwarzenegger's terminator. Her mission is the same: Kill Sarah Connor. The female terminator finds a Sarah Connor who has just gotten married, and is honeymooning in San Francisco. But this Sarah Connor isn't *the* Sarah Connor. Connor is her married name, her original name being Sarah Lang. This Sarah Connor has married her husband Michael to kill him and take over his vast wealth. So, while she's trying to kill *him*, the terminator's trying to kill *her*!"

And, at the same time," says Robinson, warming to his subject, "*One Shot* features a mysterious middle-aged man named Ruggles. He's a retired policeman, 30 years on the force, and he puts two and two together about the female terminator. They meet in San Francisco."

But who can the readers root for? After all, the Sarah Connor in *One Shot* is a would-be murderess, just as deadly and despicable as the terminator trying to kill her. "That's true," he allows, "but she changes. As she perceives the threat from the terminator, she genuinely begins to fall in love with her husband."

Robinson tried to inject a certain feeling into *Terminator: One Shot*. "Do you remember the movie *Blood Simple*?" he asks. "It was a film where you never knew what people were thinking, or what motivations drove them. There were plot twists upon twists. That's what I tried to do, combine *Blood Simple* with *Terminator*."

By contrast, he describes *Terminator: Secondary Objectives* as a "very simple plot." Simple, that is, if you recall the first Dark Horse series, since *Secondary Objectives* carries forward that storyline.



With *One Shot*, writer James Robinson combines *Blood Simple* and *Terminator*.

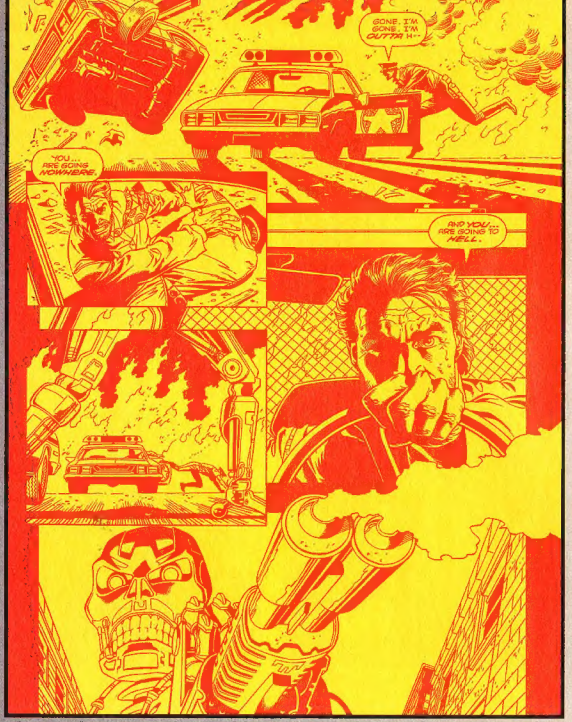
In the previous *Terminator* miniseries, a team of humans from the future—the ones battling the terminators—time-tripped to the past to prevent the Terminator technology from ever being developed. Aware of what was afoot, four terminators also came back in time to stop the team from realizing its objective. When the machine guns ceased chattering, and the explosive smoke cleared the last panels, the terminators were apparently destroyed.

And the humans achieved their victory at a heavy cost. "Of the human rebel team," recounts Robinson, "only Mary, the leader, is still alive. And Astin, the research scientist, is still around, as well as one cyborg, a member of the original terminator team. You'll recall he became a 'good guy' at the first series' end, and betrayed the other terminators."

Save for the one turncoat, the terminators are wiped out, aren't they? "Well," Robinson confides, "one of those terminators blew up while falling off a bridge. In my series, we discover that he—or it—has survived! This terminator, C890.L, reprograms himself. He's not fighting human rebels anymore. He has switched to his secondary objectives: the death of Sarah Connor and her young son, John Connor. His objectives are discovered by Mary and the cyborg. Sarah Connor is in Mexico, so the terminator travels south on a motorbike. Mary and the cyborg fly down to Mexico, get there ahead of him and wait to do battle, to protect Sarah."

Then, the plot thickens, or maybe deepens. "About the same time as the first series," Robinson elaborates, "another terminator was being incubated to be sent back to the past. It's a female, and she should have arrived at

One terminator survived Dark Horse's previous *Terminator* series. Now, he has switched to his *Secondary Objectives*.



"The main thing," says Robinson of the *Terminator* tales' appeal, "is man vs. machine."

Kyle Reese (Michael Biehn) or new characters seen in *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (licensed by Marvel and forthcoming as a separate comic). As for Sarah Connor, "her presence is very much felt in my books, though she doesn't actually appear."

As to why he believes the *Terminator* stories are so successful, on both screen and page, Robinson sounds pensive. "The main thing," he opines, "is man vs. machine. There are human beings—thinking, feeling, *emotional* human beings, people who are mortal and can bleed—against cold, hard, logical machines, who are unrelenting and can't be hurt. In short, the terminators are inhuman, or unhuman. The stories illustrate the perfect battle between polar opposites.

"The original *Terminator* film works on that level. It's also a very simple plot, if you think about it. The script stresses the humanity of Sarah and Kyle. They fall in love, go through suffering, yet overcome all obstacles. I think that's why the movie was such a success, and those elements have been carried over into the comic."

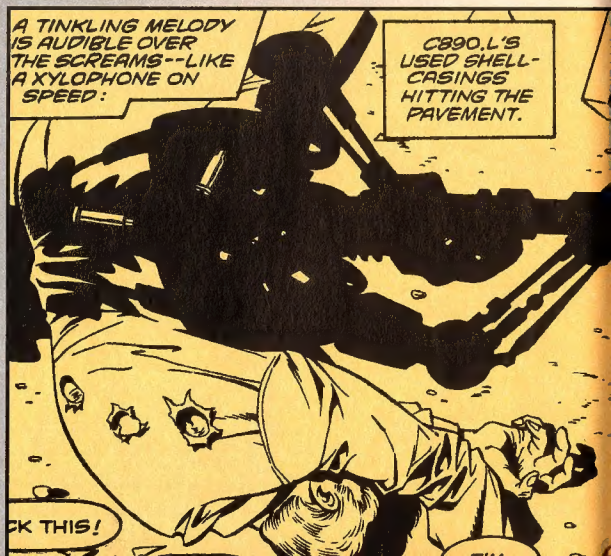
Robinson says he has been given a free hand in his *Terminator* scripts. "And I haven't given *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* any thought. My storylines are entirely different, and have *no* connection to the movie."

Terminator: Secondary Objectives won't wrap up any loose ends of the narrative weave, or bring the Dark Horse series to any kind of conclusion. Apparently, there will be characters who survive to continue the storyline if Dark Horse so chooses. "Actually," Robinson confides, "Dark Horse *will* the same moment as the terminator team from the first series, since the time setting is fixed. A spacial mishap occurs, and she arrives in the middle of the ocean! So, during the first series, this terminator is on the sea floor, groping toward shore."

Terminator meets *The Abyss*? Not quite, when the female terminator finally hits the beach from her underwater odyssey. "She has arrived too late, and so must make up for lost time. Eventually, she too heads for Mexico, to join the other characters."

Readers are bound to compare Robinson's series with the one penned by John Arcudi. In speaking of Arcudi's *Terminator*, Robinson observes, "The first series was *very* action-oriented, too. After all, it's about terminators. But one of the things that I tried to do was to bring out the characters' humanity to juxtapose them with the cold, unfeeling, machine-like nature of the terminators. I'm playing one off against the other."

Robinson didn't have to worry about any movie characters intruding into his script. There will be *no* cameos by the Schwarzenegger Terminator, nor by



"It is a one-shot, one-time tale," Robinson says.

have a third series. It's already on the drawing board. As far as I know, the third series' writer will be Ian Edgington, another British writer. Whatever plot points I've established, he will carry forward, just as I carried forward the plot points that John Arcudi set down."

Does that rule out Robinson's ever penning another *Terminator* story? "Well," he hedges, "if I came up with another great idea, I would be interested in doing more. I must admit, I don't have anything at the moment. Besides, I've just done two virtually back to back! With these things, it doesn't work unless you can give 100 percent of yourself, and I just don't have any ideas—*fresh* ideas—at the moment."

James Robinson has come a long way, literally and figuratively, since he first took up his pen to write. "I started in the business," Robinson recalls, "by writing a graphic novel in England titled *London's Dark*. That brought me to the attention of Archie Goodwin and Matt Wagner. Matt offered me *Grendel Tales*, which I wrote, and that brought me to the attention of *Grendel*'s editor, Diana Schutz. She recommended me for *Terminator: Secondary Objectives*."

In the two years since he first landed on these shores from Britain, Robinson has managed to keep occupied. As if to anchor his newfound American roots, he has married an American. "I'm settled, and very happy here," he declares.

Besides the *Terminator* books, he adapted *Faust* for First Comics' *Classics Illustrated*. Now, with *Terminator* finished, Robinson has moved on to other work. "At the moment," he explains, "I'm doing a Prestige series for DC Comics called *The Golden Age*. It's about all the old classic DC characters, superheroes like Green Lantern. I'm also involved with some other projects. For example, I'm doing a graphic novel for Epic called *Sixty-seven Seconds*. So, I'm very busy lining up things. It's a way of keeping a high profile."

James Robinson hopes that *Terminator: One Shot* and *Terminator: Secondary Objectives* will succeed. He has given the two *Terminator* tales his best shot, but ultimately, as he puts it "That's for the public to decide." CS

All Secondary Objectives Art: Paul Gulacy

Robinson may return for an encore "if I come up with another great idea."

When King Richard befriends this Sherwood Forester, it's only to betray him.

By LYNNE STEPHENS

Robin Hood

Robin Hood Logo: Trademark & Copyright 1991 Eclipse Enterprises

In Eclipse Books' three-part *Robin Hood* mini-series, the swashbuckling Robin reigns supreme over his Sherwood Forest dominion, aided by compatriots Little John, Friar Tuck, Will Scarlet and his traditional band of rogues. And the Sheriff of Nottingham, along with his nefarious henchman, Sir Guy of Gisbourne, provides the expected villainous turn, seeking revenge against his longtime nemesis.

But *Robin Hood* series creator Valarie Jones decided against presenting her readers with yet another "origin" of one of England's most renowned legends. "That, I think, is something that *has been* handled and *is being* handled all over the place. What I wanted to do was concentrate on an episode at the peak of his career, which from my research I figure to be somewhere around 1190," says Jones.

Her story focuses on Robin Hood's first encounters with King Richard the Lionhearted, and features secondary stories addressing Robin's hide-and-seek baiting of the Sheriff, "and his relationship with Marian. The whole thing definitely has a tone of swashbuckling fun to it," she says. "But probably the biggest difference between what I'm doing and what other people have done is my treatment of the King himself, and my treatment of the time period, which I've worked on making more accurate."

Jones' "twist" in the telling of the oft-told tales came to her while researching both the Robin Hood legends and the sometimes ugly realities of 12th-century politics. "Each Robin Hood story has its differences, its hook, that goes far away from legend. Mine is the relationship between King Richard and Robin Hood."

Eclipse's *Robin Hood* hopes to be "dramatically and historically correct," while still having a "good sense of fun."

Robin's first meeting with King Richard "is based on one of the most famous legends. Basically, in the story, King Richard came to Nottingham pretending to be a priest, and was captured by Robin Hood. Robin robs him, the two have dinner together, and then Richard reveals himself," says Jones. In awe, Robin falls on one knee before the King, who then pardons the outlaw "and takes him off on the Crusades.

"Marian is still pretty lily-livered," says Hood creator Valarie Jones. "But for her time, she's very radical."

"In my story, it doesn't quite happen that way; it doesn't have that sort of nice happy ending. I don't think kings necessarily would have forgiven a criminal that easily."

Mindful of Richard's Borgia-like family history, which included unending political machinations by his mother, Eleanor of Aquitane, Jones paints a craftier-than-normal picture of this traditionally beloved monarch. "It's my feeling that maybe, just maybe, if Richard really was from this family of tricksters and if he really was a smart king, then he might have ulterior motives for even hanging out with Robin Hood. Maybe he has his own plans. So, essentially, the big change for me was instead of Richard becoming a friend of Robin, I have Richard trick and betray Robin."

Continuing her supposition, Jones adds, "One thing about Robin Hood that becomes clear through all the legends was that he was extremely loyal to the King. He didn't believe the King was at fault for anything. Robin believed that everything that was wrong with the system had to be the people *in* the system, not the King."

In Jones' story, "When Richard comes to Sherwood and reveals himself, Robin does drop down on one knee and say, 'You've got my life, whatever you want.' And in the plan the King has hatched, that works perfectly."

In a similar vein, Jones reasons out Robin's unique relationship with Maid Marian. The three-part series "does a lot to explore their meeting and romance," says Jones. "I start the story with Robin and his men trying to rescue Little John, captive in a castle. The first time Robin sees Marian, she's

All Robin Hood Painted Art: By & Copyright 1991 Christopher Schenck

Robin Hood Layout Art: Tim Truman

"The Crusades were big stuff," enthuses Jones. "Everybody was very patriotic about them."

starting a fire to cover their escape for no other reason than she wants the outlaw to win," says Jones. "Gee, throwing a torch down and saving your life—that's love at first sight!"

Marian "is still pretty lily-livered compared to women today. But for her time, she's very radical. One of the scenes I had the most fun writing was based on the legend of Marian meeting Robin Hood," says Jones.

"In the very first mention of Marian, *ever*, in a ballad, she is said to be fighting Robin in disguise. And they fight to a standstill because in the Robin Hood legends, *everyone* fought to a standstill. When they reach this standoff, she unmasks herself as a woman, they fall in love, and she goes off with him."

Marian, in Jones' version, "sneaks after Robin into the forest to spy on him. She gets caught, has to fight him—and *loses*. I don't think she really would have fought him to a standstill."

Jones believes that "a normal woman wouldn't run off with an outlaw for the heck of it, so we have to assume she must not have been a 'normal' woman. She was a little bit ahead of her time, not satisfied with being a 'quiet wife and mother' type. I figure she was very young, because she was unmarried, and women were married quite young at that time.

"Marian was probably in her mid-teens or late teens and had heard of this fantastic outlaw and had crazy ideas of running off. She has a desire to be strong and free, and fight with a sword and learn the bow. She may not know how to do it that well yet, but she has a *desire* to do it.

"When I started studying the Robin Hood myths, I didn't pay that much attention to Marian because she was always 'the girl to be rescued'—until I found that ballad," says Jones. The combination of the ballad's extreme age and its portrayal of a feisty Marian intrigued her. "I thought this woman *must* have really been something to have made this kind of impression. At that time, she became, to me, an equal of Robin Hood."

Jones enjoyed rounding out Robin's band with other legendary characters—some familiar, some less so. "One of the fictional ideas that I—as well as many other people—have used is the concept of a Saracen, or a Moor, from the Crusades. The Saracen *I* have is a slave to Richard who was captured in the Crusades. He has been given to the King as a bodyguard by the King's relatives," says Jones.

Makir, a former warrior, "doesn't want to be a slave, but doesn't really do anything about it until he meets up with Robin and his men. He eventually joins Robin. It makes him an outlaw, but it makes him free. He becomes very important to the storyline, and actually saves Robin's life."

Other characters in Sherwood Forest bear more familiar names. "Robin spends most of his time with Little John, Tuck, Will Scarlet, Allan-A-Dale and Will Stuckly. Little John is probably the most similar to Robin. Scarlet is the hothead of the group, and you can always count on Allan-A-Dale for a song.

"And Tuck, while still a rather jolly, laughing sort of person, is the most logical and intelligent. He has the education, and he understands the way the nobility works." In this version, "Tuck is probably the smartest guy in the band.

"Instead of making Robin the lone hero, I tried to make him more of a King Arthur type, a good leader who listens to what his people have to say."

Pausing a moment, Jones adds, "*Everybody* is there, except Prince John, who's probably someone many people associate with Robin Hood. He's probably the *least* likely to have connected with Robin Hood until Robin was actually in his middle or late age," towards the end of Richard's sojourn in the Crusades.

Obviously enthusiastic about her

subject, Jones continues: "The Crusades, by the way, were big stuff. Everybody was very patriotic about them. The common people thought they were terrific. When Richard got to the third Crusade, he had to figure out a way to re-enact something called the Saladin Tithe, which was a tax each person had to pay. It was roughly 10 percent of their worth."

Jones' interest in the minutiae of 12th-century existence stems from her longstanding fascination with history. "It has always been a hobby of mine." She feels that, when working on any project set in the past, "it's essential to understand what the reality was so that you can break the rules and make fiction out of it."

Although many interpretations of Robin Hood lore, including the 1938 Errol Flynn movie classic, set the Saxon-Norman conflict as a backdrop to their tales—Robin Hood as the wronged Saxon nobleman facing off against the Norman conquerors—Jones takes the opposite approach.

"I make it very clear that Robin and his men are all 'just guys.' In fact, what Robin Hood was doing at the time didn't have much to do with taking from the rich and giving to the poor per se. It had more to do with the tyranny of the nobility.

"Robin Hood was rebelling against the Forest Law, a law enacted by the nobles whereby they could take large stretches of forest, like Sherwood, and say to the common people that they couldn't hunt the animals in the forest. All the commoners hated this law because it was ridiculous to assume that 50 square miles of forest could belong to one guy when they needed to *eat*."

Explains Jones, "Actually, the reason Robin Hood became so associated with the 'take from the rich and give to the poor' concept was because he was fighting something that was keeping the poor from having even a fair share of life, much less what the rich had.

"While not turning this into a political comic, I've tried to keep a lot of the politics in so people would understand *why* these guys were rebels and outlaws. Just the very concept: To become an outlaw in that time period meant you risked extreme torture and a horrible death. They really *did* things like burn you, or draw and quarter you, so you really didn't have a chance of getting away with it. It wasn't something somebody would take on just to make extra money. It had to be something you *really* wanted to do."

With all her hypothesizing about what a "real" Robin Hood *could* do, does Jones believe that Robin Hood actually lived? "Yes, I do. I believe there was more than one. There was probably one guy in the beginning who might have amassed enough of a band to be threatening. In the same way that we call army guys 'G.I. Joes,' I figure from that point on, whenever there was somebody who became a notable hero, he became a 'Robin Hood'."

She also believes the first Robin "was a common man. The hiding out in the forest, the guerilla-type warfare, the way he was so loyal to king and country—that sort of thing suggests that he was a normal man, with a normal level of intelligence for that time period.

"He wasn't highly educated, and not in it for the money, or greed, because if he were, and he were a nobleman, there were many *better* ways for him to do it. You *didn't* become an outlaw. That was just *asking* for it."

Jones, who joined Eclipse in March 1991, first became interested in creating a Robin Hood series while working as an editor for *Classics Illustrated*. "When I came to work here, I broached the idea to the publisher and editor-in-chief, and they liked it.

"Then, I had to rehash *everything* I ever knew about Robin Hood *very* quickly. The actual writing of the script [in late March] took me about two days, but there was a lot of thinking behind it. I dreamt, ate and slept Robin Hood for weeks."

After editing, the script then passed to layout artist Tim Truman. "Tim has worked for Eclipse for many years, turning out such wonderful things as the *Scout* series and *The Spider* [COMICS SCENE #19]. He's one of the most dynamic artists in the comics business. The concept of doing Robin fascinated him, so he jumped on board.

"Then, we talked to a few painters, but when Chris Schenck's samples came in, we just went crazy. They were beautiful."

Jones is quick to acknowledge the creative input of everyone involved in the project. Referring to Truman, Jones says, "He has a much better understanding of, say, how to handle a swordfight than I do. And that comes through.

"The script as I wrote it is not the same as it ends up. You have the editor, cat yronwode, who has a lot to do with making the script work and tuning up the dialogue. Then, Tim and Chris have their inputs as to how the scenes should go. By the time you get to the end of the whole process, it's really four people, not one. Everyone has a very equal share in every part of it."

Popular interest in Robin Hood may be especially buoyed this summer due to Kevin Costner's *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves*. Jones denies that Eclipse Books' publication of the series in July, August and September was timed to coincide with the film's opening. "If I had really wanted [to tie in with the film], we should have published in June," says Jones. "But it certainly won't hurt."

Jones would gladly continue Robin's tales if the first series "does well. Certainly, there are many more stories to tell. We're at the point where his career has really gotten rolling, and there's much more we can say."

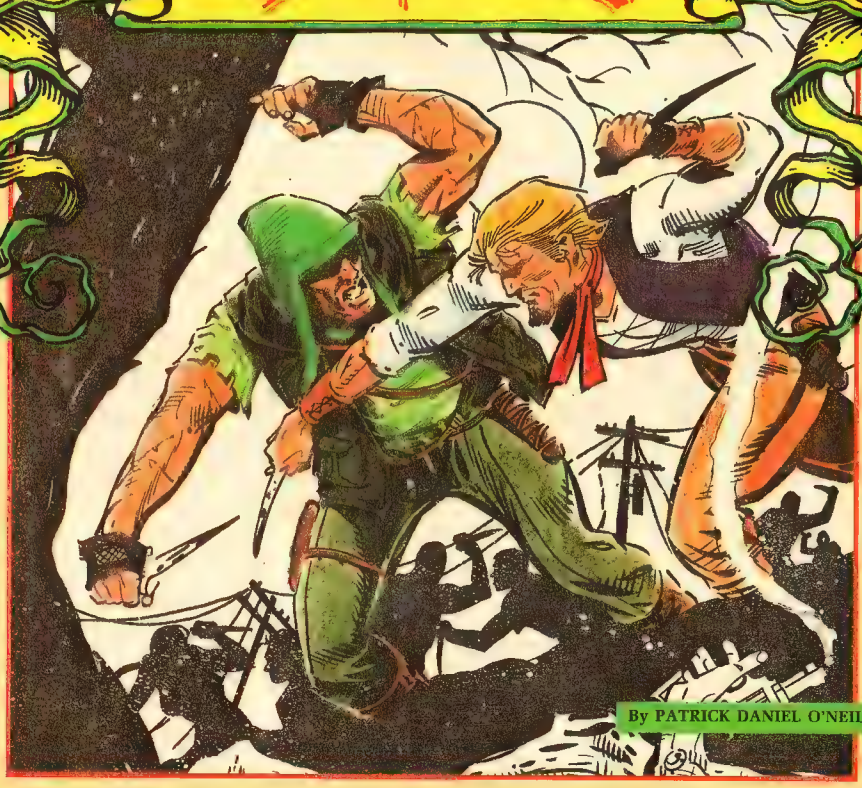
Why does Valarie Jones think Robin Hood still captures the public's imagination eight centuries after making his initial appearance? "The idea of living free of law is always one we've liked as a society," she says. "We love our outlaws, because they do things we're not brave enough to do. Robin is an outlaw who does it for the good of the poor. He fights for the underdog and wins. That's something we all want to happen." CS

In Robin Hood's era, "everyone fought to a standstill," says Jones.

Jones feels that Robin's "guerilla-type warfare" and his "loyalty to the king" suggest that he was a "normal man."

They're Not Merry Men. They're

Outlaws



Outlaws Characters & Art: Copyright 1991 Michael Jan Friedman & Luke McDonnell

By PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL

He's a man trying to be a myth, trying to live up to the proportions of a legend...and, in the process, sacrificing himself for his cause," says writer Michael Jan Friedman of Hood, the hero of *Outlaws*. "He is almost consumed by that legend, as if it were eating him alive."

Described as a cross between Robin Hood and *Mad Max*, the eight-issue mini-series from DC Comics follows Hood and his band as they struggle against the tyranny of King John and his Lord Conductor, in a post-apocalyptic future in which all technology is controlled by the nobility. The tale is told through the eyes of "Little" Jess McCuller, a slave who escapes his captors and witnesses the outlaws' successful attack on a slave caravan in Hudson Wood. As Jess gets to know the band and its mysterious leader, so does the audience.

Friedman is probably best known to comics fans for his work on DC's *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and for his *Trek* novels from Pocket Books. Illustrating *Outlaws* is Luke (*Suicide Squad*) McDonnell. The editors are Brian Augustyn and Kim Yale.

"The idea came to me a number of years ago. Originally, it was an idea for a science-fiction novel," Friedman explains. "I was into heroic fantasy at the time and I had drawn on Norse mythology for some of the work I was doing. I was looking at other sources of mythology that I liked and was familiar with. But it just didn't want to fit into a novel format. It kept squirming and wanting out. I thought about doing it as a comic book, but I wasn't working in comics at the time. I thought about pitching it to independents, but it never seemed quite ready.

"Some stories come to mind and you say to yourself, 'That's a great plot; that's a plot that can sustain a novel,' and others come to mind in an episodic fashion and the idea is a visual idea. You're not thinking only in terms of a plot and characters, but in terms of what they look like, what the settings look like. This was always a *very* visual idea.

"It was still in the back of my mind when I started doing the *Next Generation* book for DC," he continues, "and I took out the file, looked at it again and worked on it some more. It was a very long time evolving, four years or so. It's not like I saw something and said, 'Wow! What a great idea!' "

Beyond the obvious parallels to Robin Hood and the fight for freedom, Friedman says the theme of *Outlaws* is the very idea of the hero. "That's something that has really always fascinated me, being a comic-book reader from way back," he confesses. "Heroes were very conventional when I started reading comics, then they started leaning more toward the anti-hero. But the idea of *being* a hero has always been interesting to me—and in this case, you have a hero who's trying to live up to an historical image, I guess you could say a literary image.

"He's a self-conscious hero. He knows he wants to be a hero, he knows he wants to do heroic things—but in his own estimation, he never quite

"Hood can't seem to rally the people behind him," Friedman says. "People don't have the gumption to follow him."

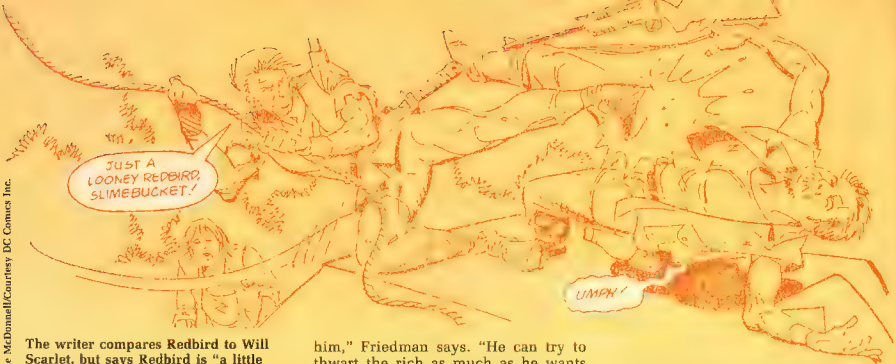
reaches heroic proportions. It's a character who's aware of his heroism and still feels it falls short. I just finished writing issue #6, and in that issue, things start to go his way—and he doesn't know how to handle it. He says, 'I feel like I've been pursuing this legend as hard as I can for such a long time...and now, I feel as though the legend is pursuing me.' The story is about that struggle to be a hero of legendary proportions—which is ultimately self-destructive."

Michael Jan Friedman says *Outlaws'* Hood "is almost consumed" by the legend of Robin Hood, "as if it were eating him alive."

Although Hood is the center of the story, Friedman says, he was never intended to be the *whole* story. Each of the Merry Men—"They're *never* referred to that way; they're always called outlaws"—is a variation on one of the traditional Robin Hood cast members. Little Jess is Little John. Southpaw is Alan-a-Dale. Redbird is Will Scarlet. Helion is Maid Marian. Tinker Tom is Friar Tuck. "So, they're all corollaries of the originals. Right from the beginning, however, I wanted them to be different from their traditional counterparts," Friedman notes.

"The dashing version of Robin Hood we're familiar with from the Errol

Friedman's Church of the Common Wheel is for those who worship the wheel as "the essence of technology, the same technology that's denied to them."



All Outlaws Art: Luke McDonnell/Courtesy DC Comics Inc.

The writer compares Redbird to Will Scarlet, but says Redbird is "a little nuts."

Flynn movie, the very romantic version, is something I wanted to avoid right away. I wanted a stark, grim, dark Robin Hood figure—and each of his Merry Men is twisted in some way, some more than others. Redbird, for instance—we don't know very much about Will Scarlet, but he was always a romantic figure—here, Redbird's a little nuts. His twin brother was killed, burned to death for stealing a loaf of bread, and that twisted Redbird. And all the others are similarly twisted, either inside or out. Southpaw is the closest thing we have to a romantic figure—and he has a mangled hand, thanks to the law. They're all negations or denials of the original romantic characters, because I wanted this to be a more grim, realistic portrayal."

This darkening of the traditional Robin Hood mythos is even evident in the plot. This is no easy task Hood has set for himself—unlike the people of 12th century England in the legends, the inhabitants of Hudson Wood have no experience with better times. "Hood can't seem to rally the people behind him," Friedman says. "He can try to thwart the rich as much as he wants and the people still don't have the gumption to follow him."

Stating a society combines elements of 12th century England and the world of *The Road Warrior* doesn't really reveal much about how it works or how it got that way. Friedman says this is a world that worships a technology it no longer has. "The kingdom is, for all intents and purposes, New York State. The capital is Albany, what we call Alban Town. Just as Sherwood Forest was a high-traffic area in Robin Hood's day, Hudson Wood is where goods and slaves are transported in this world.

"Lord Conductor is basically in charge of seeing that things move efficiently and securely. He's a descendant, apparently, of an old-time railroad conductor. Not knowing much about the 20th century, he reveres that image and sees it as his responsibility that things move efficiently. So, naturally, this outlaw band is a real thorn in his side. This gets into the technology—technology is basically the province of the King, and, to some extent, the province of the people who work for him. The King has gotten his hands into every component of surviving mechanical technology and monopolized it. It's one of the ways he maintains control over the peasants.

"The church is called the Church of the Common Wheel, and it's another link to 20th century technology. These are people who have come to worship the wheel as the essence of technology," Friedman continues, "the same technology that's denied to them. As the cross is the symbol of Christianity, the wheel, the circle, becomes the symbol of the religion in Hood's era."

That kind of imagery is played with throughout the series, says Friedman, as McDonnell has left-overs of the 20th century in the background of the world—items like rusting bicycles, old political posters and other detritus. The inhabitants of Hudson Wood see these things—even use some of them—but they have no idea of what they once might have been.

The world declined from the one we live in to this debased state due to "a plague—we don't go into the details,

Former slave "Little" Jess McCuller tells the tale of Friedman's *Outlaws*.

but it might have been something like AIDS, or biological warfare that spread beyond anyone's intentions," Friedman explains. "It basically wiped out most of society and plunged the world into an era of savagery. When the world emerged from that savagery, what was left was the common people—who were now divorced from technology and forced to think about day-to-day survival, like medieval peasants—and the physically strong—who could seize the remaining guns and machines and fuel supplies and become the new nobility. King John is a descendant of those people, who has become very aristocratic, and he genuinely thinks he's doing the commoners a favor by keeping them in line and maintaining order. He thinks order is crucial—at any cost. The irony is, he thinks he's helping these people while he crushes them beneath his tyrant's boot."

Outlaws is designed to be complete in eight issues; it's not a "pilot" for a regular monthly title. However, "if it sells real well, there's an opening to continue it. It's primary purpose is *not* to spawn an ongoing series; it's meant to be a statement unto itself. Obviously, if it sells well and they want it to be a series, I'll be there."

Robin Hood has suddenly become the focus of a media frenzy this summer. The Kevin Costner film, *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves* (distributed by DC's parent, Warner Bros.), is a major cause—but there has also been a Robin Hood TV movie (on FBC), a Robin Hood tie-in in this year's *Green Arrow Annual*, and a Robin Hood mini-series from Eclipse (see page 8). Is the public saturated with Lincoln green?

"The interest in Robin Hood can only help *Outlaws*," Friedman says. "It's serendipitous; this idea has been in the back of my head for so long. I don't think even DC knew about all the media attention that would be focused on Robin Hood when they OKed the project. There will be a media blitz; I haven't seen the Kevin Costner movie, but I know this is a very different take on the idea. On the other hand, I think anyone who's at all interested in Robin Hood will certainly be interested in this comic. Beyond the characters and the basic situation, there are many details and nuances that resonate with the Robin Hood myth for those who are very familiar with it; the more people know about Robin Hood, the more they'll get out of *Outlaws*.

"Maybe I am a little concerned about some readers taking the cynical attitude that we're just cashing in," Michael Jan Friedman admits. "However, if it's good, if it's well-written and well-drawn, I think most comics readers will accept *Outlaws* on its own merits." CS

Friedman notes that Hood tries to be a hero, "but in his own estimation, he never quite reaches heroic proportions."

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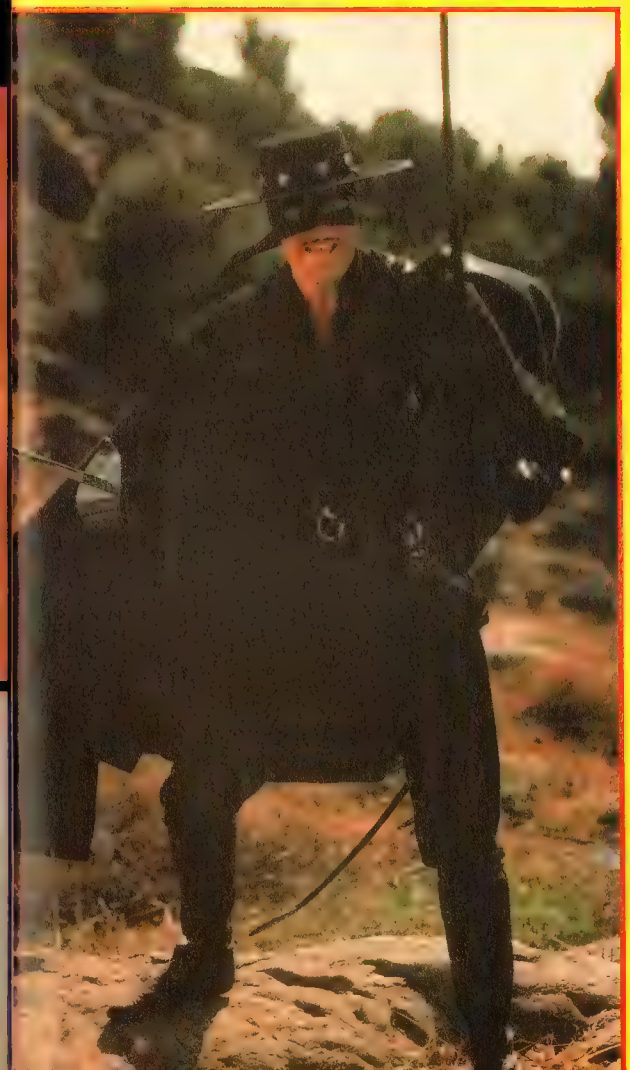


Taking his turn as another legend, Duncan Regehr steps out as the latest Zorro.

By JANETTE HYEM

Each week, the stealthy figure of Duncan Regehr sweeps across TV screens for 30 minutes. Shown by the Family Channel to good ratings, the new *Zorro* has made its mark. In its second season already, this Spain-located show has captured a new generation of Zorro followers.

Having been promoted to the nth degree, the series *should* be successful. After a slight change of cast, when Henry Darrow replaced Efrem Zimbalist Jr. (who dropped out for personal reasons), a likable father-and-son approach emerged. Not only do Darrow and Regehr resemble one another, they *speak* alike as well. The two men had never met before *Zorro*, and both were surprised at the similarities between them. The only loss to the show has been Michael Tylo as El Alcalde. A show needs a good villain, and here was one. Alas, the good guys always win.

Zorro is shot outside Madrid, with most of the sets built specifically for the show. Complete with cloak, mask, whip and sword, Zorro is everywhere—and nowhere. "Well, that's what the script says, so I guess it's true," quips Regehr.

From 1976 to 1980, Regehr (STARLOG #122) trained for a spot on Canada's Olympic boxing team, before choosing instead to pursue an acting career. Tall, dark and strikingly handsome, Regehr has a Canadian accent that is only just noticeable. He honed his acting experience performing Shakespearean theater in Stratford, Ontario. His previous credits include the Visitor leader Charles in *"V,"* Dracula in director Fred Dekker's *The Monster Squad*, the antagonistic prince in *Wizards & Warriors* and *The Last Days of Pompeii*. The road to *Zorro* was a long, drawn-out journey, the actor declares.

"We had talked about doing the show two years earlier," Regehr recounts. "At the time, I was tied up with Disney Studios. The project that kept me from *Zorro* was called *Earth*Star Voyager*, which was proposed as a series. I tried to get out of it, but Disney said it would go on the air. Of course, that never happened. Two years later, the *Zorro* pilot had already been made with a different actor, but they were unhappy with him. I was approached again and asked if I was

still interested. We shot a two-hour movie which was intended to be a pilot, but unfortunately aired way after the series started. Then, I had a really pleasant surprise: My friend Ray Austin was signed as director. I've known Ray for some time now and was only too pleased to find that for the second season, he was set to produce many of the episodes as well."

Regehr found his hands full with his new role—or, one might say, *both* his new roles. "Oh, well, they are great, each character," he nods. "Don Diego is an educated man, well-versed in the arts and sciences, and Zorro aids the poor and helpless. I'm just having a ball. I try to do my own stunts, and I do all my own fencing. I was always in some sort of fight at school in Ontario, and I learned to fence there. I luckily kept it up and it came in very handy for the role. Very often, the stunt coordinator is my opponent, and we use him as the villain. In fact, you only usually see his arm or hand. Sometimes, we put in the other actor for a couple of quick pops, but nothing really complicated. Then, we switch back to me or the stunt coordinator's arm. It's very cleverly done, though it would be better if we could get real actors to do it—which hopefully, as the show progresses, will happen."

"Don Diego is an educated man, well-versed in the arts and sciences," notes Duncan Regehr, a.k.a. Zorro.

A crimefighter's life isn't always a lonely one; after all, Zorro (Regehr) gets to rescue Patrice Camhi.

A promotional clip on the Family Channel showed Regehr's portrait as the titular character in the biographical TV movie *My Wicked, Wicked Ways...The Legend of Errol Flynn*. It also implied that the producers picked Regehr for Zorro from watching that movie When told of this, Regehr's reaction is comical "Oh, really? Well, *that's* nice to know. You mean I wasn't the cheapest guy around?" Regehr finds this amusing and vows to look into the matter.

Regehr enjoys his work, to the extent that, while sick during last season's episodes, he still kept up the gruelling pace: shooting two episodes a week, each requiring three days. "The days are long and very physical," states Regehr. "I also have lots of speeches in my dual characters. I must say that I do get a lot of support from the other actors. People ask all the time if I based my Zorro on any of my predecessors', such as Guy Williams' [STARLOG #114]. I never even *saw* any of those guys. I don't follow anyone's ideas except my own."

Humor can be seen in the character, alongside the standard characteristics. Pushed to choose between the separate personalities of his role, Regehr is unsure which he prefers. "Don Diego, although not as charismatic as Zorro, has other aspects that are much more interesting. He has much more to hide in some respects and is a much meeker person, whereas Zorro has that costume and all the trappings that go with it and many more tools. Don Diego has to play a very powerful game all the time. Occasionally, he slips and must cover for himself." Regehr is pleased to note that he has been allowed to put some of his own ideas and mannerisms into the series.

Before graduating to Zorro, Regehr practiced his tongue-in-cheek delivery playing arch-villain Prince Dirk Blackpool in the SF/fantasy series *Wizards & Warriors*. *My Wicked, Wicked Ways...* followed, based on Errol Flynn's autobiography.

"For that role, I watched countless Flynn films and talked to some of his friends," Regehr reveals. "I needed to get a feel for the guy. But with real-life characters, I don't try to *be* them, I just mimic them. Errol Flynn was a myth and a legend. I seem to be playing

myths and legends frequently.

"While on my next project, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, I had a phone call from the *Zorro* producer, who came over to England to meet me," Regehr goes on. "I had received the script already, and he was very keen to get me for the role. So, that's it! I graduated to *Zorro*. I grew, and so has the series, plus the town with its pueblos." With 22 episodes in the second season *already* aired to good response, the third season's now in the midst of production, and the Family Channel reports plans to possibly air the program daily next year.

Regehr faces the extended time abroad like a trouper. "I love to travel. The second season took five-and-a-half months away from home, but there are only the two of us, so it doesn't really matter," he shrugs. "We—my wife Catherine and I—travel all over Europe during the hiatus from the show. I usually go out to Spain a little earlier than necessary to try out the horses or practice my fencing. Having raised horses in LA, I've ridden all my life."

Since age 14, Regehr has been an actor. While still attending school, he was working professionally. Thus, the daunting hours of *Zorro* are taken in stride. To keep trim for the role, he lifts weights and subsists on a vegetarian diet. One unexpected comment Duncan Regehr makes: He never watches the show. He hasn't seen *any* of the series on TV, owing to the fact that he doesn't subscribe to cable. CS

"The days are long and very physical," Regehr admits.

Once TV's *Batman*, Adam West meets a fellow masked crimefighter as con man Dr. (Bruce?) Wayne.

Zorro would make any father proud, especially his own (Henry Darrow).

All Zorro Photos: Copyright 1991 The Family Channel

When ZORRO Rides!

Guy Williams rides as TV's first Zorro.

For almost 75 years, the Robin Hood of the Old West has battled oppression.

By TOM WEAVER

The clatter is swordblades being drawn. The black cape billows in the midnight breeze. The glint of moonlight sparkles on white teeth, bared in an audacious grin. Astride a spirited horse, a masked avenger leads his followers on yet another nightly raid, coming and going like a mounted corps of graveyard ghosts...

Youngsters may think these traits are being displayed for the first time on the Family Channel with Duncan Regehr (see page 17). But their parents, and generations before them, know that the masked rider El Zorro (or, literally translated, "The Fox") has been high in the pantheon of action heroes since before movies had sound.

The first Zorro film, in fact, reached screens only a year after the renegade character was born in the magazine pages of *All-Star Weekly* in August 1919. The masked hero was the creation of Illinois native Johnston McCulley (1883-1958), a prolific writer who entered the profession as a journalist, reporting for newspapers like *The Kansas City Star*. McCulley also tried his hand as a playwright and wrote scores of stories, but his reputation today rests on his Zorro tales.

Well-traveled and a student of history, McCulley laid his initial 39-chapter, five-installment tale of Zorro (*The Curse of Capistrano*, purportedly written in six days) against the backdrop of Old Spanish California during the time of the mission empire. It was in this exotic 19th-century setting that the Robin Hood of the Old West lashed out against the oppressors of the poor with sword, whip and pistol, merrily serv-

Johnston McCulley's *Curse of Capistrano* became the basis for Douglas Fairbanks Sr.'s first great action film, *The Mark of Zorro* (1920).

ing up justice to evildoers in this long-ago heyday of tyrannic alcaldes and their brutal soldiery. Until the story's end, Zorro's mask concealed his true identity, that of wealthy Don Diego Vega, in which guise he acted the fop to divert suspicion.

Today, the great silent film star Douglas Fairbanks is best-remembered for costume classics like *The Three Musketeers* (1921) and *Robin Hood* ('22). During the teens, however, the actor was famed not for swashbuckling roles, but as an acrobatic comedian in topical social farces. An agent convinced him to purchase the rights to *The Curse of Capistrano*, but Fairbanks nevertheless remained reluctant to tamper with his established screen image by playing the pulp hero. Despite his early reservations, the dual role of Don Diego Vega and Zorro was tailor-made for the actor, furnishing an ideal link between his earlier socialite roles and a career as an athletic action star.

Following and embellishing upon the McCulley story, Fairbanks' film, *The Mark of Zorro* (1920), adhered to an action formula which may seem trite today, but wowed audiences in the days before masked crimefighters truly came into vogue. Set in the 1840s, the film begins with a closeup of a trooper, his face lividly scarred by a Z-shaped pattern. The wound, of course, was administered by Zorro, champion of the downtrodden dons and peons of the province. The governor (George Periolat)—"greedy, licentious, arkogant"—has offered a 10,000-peso reward for Zorro's capture, but the cigar-smoking crusader easily confounds the soldiers led by Captain Ramon (Robert McKim) and Sgt. Gonzales (Noah Beery Sr.). In his other identity as the blue-blooded Don Diego, son of the aristocratic hidalgo Don Alejandro (Sydney de Grey), he's about to enter an arranged marriage with Lolita (Marguerite de la Motte), a fair damsel unaware of his twin identity and repulsed by her languid suitor ("He isn't a man—he's a fish!"). In a series of adventures, Zorro continues to outwit the militia, duels with Captain Ramon, shapes a band of caballeros into his fighting legion and forces the corrupt governor into abdication and exile.

This silent *Mark of Zorro* is a quaint item compared to many later Fairbanks films that improved on the swashbuck-

Fairbanks later repeated his *Mark of Zorro* role (shown here) in *Don Q, Son of Zorro*, playing both father and son.

ling formula. Fairbanks, of course, is nearly the entire show; effortlessly bounding over tables and other obstacles, climbing walls and roofs, branding the faces of villains with his sword of justice (this movie, not the McCulley story, introduced Zorro's habit of carving his trademark Z). Today, the uninitiated may find that the film hands out more zzzzz's than Z's, with its ludicrous caricatures of heroes and villains, absurd dialogue and supporting players whom one hesitates to call "actors." But, despite the misgivings that come from 70 years of changing public tastes and improved film techniques, it must be remembered and acknowledged that Fairbanks' first costume classic was a smash in its own era, changing the course of the star's career and turning the Zorro character into a worldwide favorite.

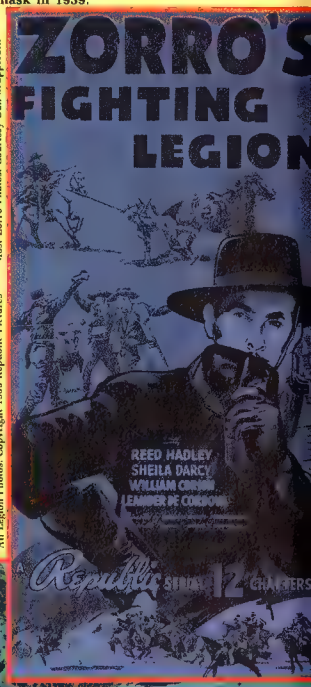
The movie also set the tone for the Zorro films to follow, somehow managing (amidst myriad floggings and disfigurements!) to emphasize the story's lighter aspects and point up the character's roguish, romantic side. Zorro kills no one in the film and frequently engages in tomfoolery, like sitting cross-legged on a table while outdueling Sgt. Gonzales, and infuriating Captain Ramon by inflicting a Z-wound on his neck and then coyly showing it to him during a break in the battle. At the film's end, apparently as one last reminder that we weren't to take this seriously, Fairbanks' actress-wife Mary Pickford stands in leading lady de la Motte's place for the final clinch and kiss.

McCulley also penned the first of countless sequels, *The Further Adventures of Zorro*, which appeared in 1922 in *Argosy All-Story Weekly* (the new title for *All-Story Weekly*). Interestingly, this new Zorro exploit incorporated some character embellishments (Zorro's Z's; parlor tricks by Don Diego) introduced in the Fairbanks film. Even more curiously, *Further Adventures'* plot was altered for use in the Zorro-less Fairbanks film *The Black Pirate* (1926), while the Zorro-less novel *Don Q's Love Story*, by K. and Esketh Prichard, was credited as the source material for the *Mark of Zorro* sequel, 1925's *Don Q, Son of Zorro*.

Another near-perfect vehicle for the flamboyant Fairbanks, *Don Q*'s story was actually much of the actor's own fabrication. In a double role, Fairbanks was not only decked out in a grey wig to portray a 30-years-older Zorro, but he also portrayed Vega's own son, Don Cesar. Director Donald Crisp also played the chief villain, who was aided by dastardly underlings Jean Hersholt and Albert MacQuarrie. It was the same old stuff plot-wise, and even featured a film clip of a duel from the previous *Zorro*, but audiences and critics loved it, with *The New York Times* commenting, "This is a photoplay which creates no end of mirth." According to leading lady Mary Astor, the film's production was interrupted frequently by a succession of celebrated visitors (including royalty) to the set.

Preparing for his role as Don Q, Fairbanks spent six weeks becoming adept in the use of an Australian stock whip. Emulating his famous dad, young Fairbanks Jr. also gave the weapon a try, but mistimed the pull-back after the crack of the whip and nearly put out his own right eye. ("I

Reed Hadley fought behind the black mask in 1939.



All Legion Photos: Copyright 1939 Republic Pictures Vost Zorro Photos: Courtesy Dan Scapperotti

The hero assembled *Zorro's Fighting Legion* to battle evil in the Republic serial.

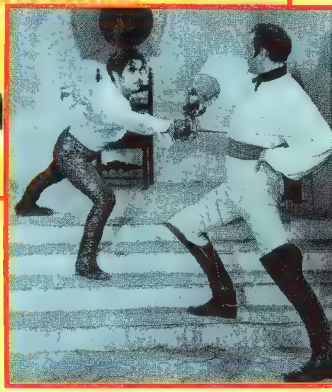
All Mark Photos: Copyright 1940 20th Century Fox

The 1940 *Mark of Zorro* made Tyrone Power a swashbuckling star.

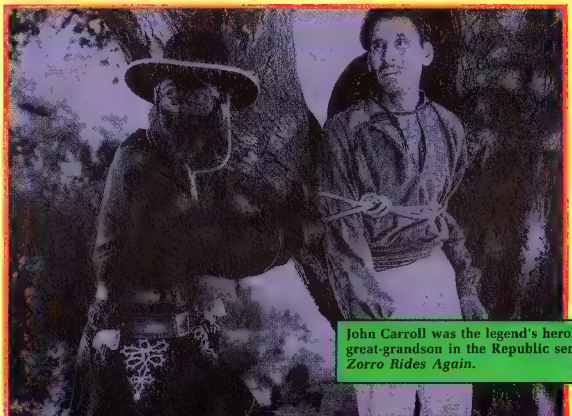
had to wear a black patch for two weeks," Fairbanks Jr. wrote in his autobiography. "One week on doctor's orders, and another because it made me feel dashing.") A comedy short subject, *Don Key, Son of Burro*, followed *Don Q* into release.

The 1920s also found Fairbanks *pere* purchasing 3,000 acres of San Diego County real estate, his intention to turn it into a hacienda called Rancho Zorro. In 1933, London Film Productions announced a Zorro picture (to star Fairbanks Sr. and Jr.) which never made it to the soundstages. Fairbanks Sr. died in December 1939, at age 56.

The next screen Zorro, cowboy star Robert Livingston, faced the wicked Commandante (Sig Rumann) who had framed him for murder in *The Bold Caballero*, a 1936 adventure produced by Republic Pictures. The 60-minute feature, which took Livingston away from his regular duties as one-third of the popular Western combo The Three Mesquiteers, remains historically important today for its early use of Technicolor. Next, Latin American leading man John Carroll donned the outfit (minus cape and sword) in the Republic serial, *Zorro Rides Again*. Taking considerable liberties with the McCulley stories, the chapterplay advanced the action to the then-present day (1937). James Vega (Carroll), great-grandson of the original Zorro, mounted his trusty steed El Rey and carried on in the fighting tradition of his fabled forefather, battling villains seeking to seize control of the California-Yucatan Railroad. Noah Beery Sr., who had played the comical Sgt. Gonzales in Fairbanks' *Mark of Zorro*, essayed a straight villainous role as the ruthless mastermind Marsden.



Power crossed swords with master villain Basil Rathbone in the 1940 version's memorable duel.



Rides Photo: Copyright 1937, 1950 Republic Pictures

John Carroll was the legend's heroic great-grandson in the Republic serial, *Zorro Rides Again*.

Retaining rights to the Zorro character, Republic continued to exploit the brave bandit in its 12- and 13-episode serials, although it was generally a descendant or imitator of Zorro and not the genuine article. The one exception, *Zorro's Fighting Legion* (1939), ranks among the best of the company's early serials, incorporating lively outdoor action, a vigorous score by William Lava and one of serialdom's most colorful villains: Don del Oro, a Yaqui Indian idol that seemingly comes to life and directs the redskins in attacks against white settlers in 1824 Mexico.

Although *Fighting Legion* steers a straight action course devoid of the sly comic sparkle that Fairbanks Sr. introduced, star Reed Hadley is amusing in scenes as the spineless Don Diego, all but raising his hands in mock horror at the mention of Zorro's name. The character's devil-may-care side, however, remained intact. Reacting to news of a 500-peso reward for Zorro's capture, Hadley's insipid Diego instantly interjects, "Oh, but is that *enough*? I should think his capture would be worth *much* more than that—1,000 pesos at least!"

The best and most popular of Zorro's many screen incarnations, 20th Century Fox's splendid *The Mark of Zorro* (1940) starred Tyrone Power as the listless Don Diego and the midnight rider. Fox's answer to Warner Bros.' immensely successful *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), this new Zorro epic utilized the well-worn plot elements of a despotic alcalde, daring raids, Zorro's hard riding on his horse Tornado and death-defying duels. It even reunited several members of the Warners *Robin Hood* cast, most notably Eugene Pallette as a robed Franciscan monk modeled after the actor's Friar Tuck. A combination of top production values, a stirring, Oscar-nominated score by Alfred Newman and able direction by Rouben Mamoulian, not to mention the thin veneer of self-parody that had become part of the Zorro film formula, made the movie seem fresh and exciting. As opposed to the silent *Mark of Zorro*, which has lost its edge over the years and stands now as a mildly amusing bit of oldtime screen hokum, the Power version only seems to improve with each viewing.

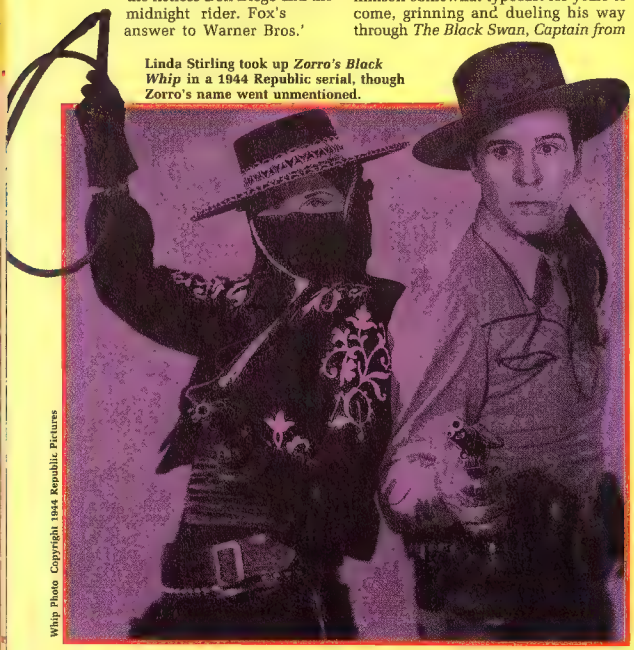
As Don Diego, the perfumed dandy in the spotless waistcoat, Power's flair for comedy, virtually untapped in previous features, was showcased. As Zorro, the exuberant, energetic actor performed with energy and style rivaling that of Fairbanks Sr. Despite jumping to number five on the list of top box office stars with *Mark of Zorro*, Power, like Fairbanks Sr., found himself somewhat typecast for years to come, grinning and dueling his way through *The Black Swan, Captain from Castille, Prince of Foxes* and other action films.

George Turner adopted the midnight rider's identity for 1947's *Son of Zorro*.

Son Photo Copyright 1947 Republic Pictures

Fred Cavens, the great Hollywood swordsman who had trained Fairbanks Sr. for the 1920 version, also coached Power; he, in fact, gave the actor the same sword Fairbanks Sr. had used in the earlier film. Power's climactic duel with villain Basil Rathbone is one of the great scenes of movie history, clearly inspired by (but far better than) the legendary Errol Flynn-Rathbone sword's-point confrontation in *Robin Hood*. Of his new on-screen opponent, expert swordsman Rathbone later commented, "Tyrone could have fenced Errol Flynn into a cocked hat." (Ever the gentleman, Rathbone neglected to mention the two deep forehead cuts that Power accidentally inflicted upon him during the sword-fight.) A handsome, enthralling, action-filled film, Power's *Mark of Zorro* remains the definitive movie version of the McCulley tale.

Zorro remained off-screen throughout the rest of the '40s, although Republic serial screenwriters invoked the Zorro name in three additional chapterplays. In their Western *Zorro's Black Whip* (1944), a pretty girl (Linda Stirling) dons mask and costume and begins a whip-cracking counter-attack against baddies working to keep the Idaho territory out of the Union. Based loosely on a story by teenage actress Ruth Roman (later a star in such films as *Champion* and *Strangers on a Train*), the serial branded the Stirling character the Black Whip, and Zorro's name was never mentioned in the 12 chapters. In 1947's *Son of Zorro*, a descendant (George Turner) adopts the Zorro identity to fight crooked politicians just after the Civil War. *The Lone Ranger*'s Clayton Moore also played the caballero's grandson in *Ghost of*



Linda Stirling took up *Zorro's Black Whip* in a 1944 Republic serial, though Zorro's name went unmentioned.

Whip Photo Copyright 1944 Republic Pictures

***Lone Ranger* Clayton Moore donned another heroic mask as the *Ghost of Zorro*, the legend's grandson.**

Ghost Photo: Copyright 1948, 1959 Republic Pictures

Zorro (1949), taking on outlaws preventing a telegraph company's expansion.

Stock footage from *Zorro's Black Whip* and *Ghost of Zorro* formed the action backbone of the lower-budgeted Republic serials *Don Daredevil Rides Again* (1951) and *Man With the Steel Whip* (1954), whose heroes—Ken (*Gunsmoke*) Curtis and Richard (not the exercise guru) Simmons, respectively—wore Zorro-like outfits to match the older footage. The early '50s also saw Walter Chiari essay the role in the overseas production *The Sign of Zorro* (1952).

Television was the next medium to exploit the bandit character, played by Guy Williams (later of *Lost in Space*, see STARLOG #114) in the black-and-white ABC/Walt Disney series *Zorro* (1957-59). Conforming exactly to the basic legend, Williams' Zorro spirited tax money away from bumbling troopers, etched his familiar Z into bill posters and adobe walls, and simpered as the less-than-dashing Don Diego de la Vega. Other characters included the tyrannical commandant (Britt Lomond) of the Fortress de Los Angeles; his fat, ineffective lieutenant (Henry Calvin); Diego's mute servant (Gene Sheldon) and Diego's father Don Alejandro (George J. Lewis, who briefly wore the outfit in *Zorro's Black Whip*).

Veterans of previous Zorro films, William Lava and Fred Cavens contributed musical and fencing expertise, respectively, but the series' plots were fairly elementary and the action lacked the necessary *élan*. Better than the show itself was its theme song, which was sung by the pop group The Chordettes and became popular in 1958. The series was a ratings winner, however, inspiring theatrical reissues of the 1940 *Mark of Zorro* and feature versions of *Zorro Rides Again* and *Ghost of Zorro*. The feature *The Sign of Zorro*, released by Buena Vista in 1960, was a compilation of segments from the Disney series. A comic book spinoff also accompanied the series.

Subsequent Zorro films have been a dicey, mixed, sometimes sordid lot. Indeed, the caped righter of wrongs began turning up in such a host of foreign films that they are difficult to track down and catalog. Among them are *Zorro* (1961, with Frank Latimore), *Zorro at the Court of Spain* (1963, George Ardisson), *Zorro and the Three Musketeers* (1963, Gordon Scott), and *Samson and the Slave Queen* (a.k.a. *Zorro contro Maciste*, 1964, Pierre Brice). Unbelievable as it might sound, the hero even turned monster-fighter in south-of-the-border fare with titles like *El Zorro Escarlata* (Zorro battles a monster conjured up by black magic) and *Zorro vs. the Killer Mummies*. Zorro whipped out more than his sword in 1972's *The Erotic Adventures of Zorro*, an X-rated West German-French co-production. This sexploitation feature made headlines when it appeared on Australian screens in place of the edited, R-rated, censor-approved prints, and when a Minnesota council comprised of senior citizens sponsored showings to raise funds for a new center for the elderly.

The 1981 spoof *Zorro, the Gay Blade* was a campy rendition with George Hamilton in a dual role as the new Zorro and his gay twin brother, Bunny Wigglesworth. When the "real" Zorro is injured, Wigglesworth replaces him in the costume, or rather, several costumes. One wonders how much the film's on-screen dedication to Rouben Mamoulian meant to the aging director of the Tyrone Power *Mark of Zorro*.

In the 1950s, Guy Williams rode across TV screens, delighting fans and selling tons of Zorro merchandise.

All TV Zorro Photos: Copyright 1957, 1958, 1959 The Walt Disney Company

The screen's busiest hero was also represented in 1962's *Il Segno di Zorro*, set in Mexico and starring Errol Flynn's son Sean as the mythic freedom fighter. The 1974 TV movie *The Mark of Zorro*, a so-so remake starring Frank Langella (as Zorro), Ricardo

Blade Photo: Copyright 1981 20th Century Fox

George Hamilton spoofed the swashbuckler as dual heroes in *Zorro, the Gay Blade*.

Zorro Photo: Copyright 1981 New World Pictures TV

Frank Latimore, Sean Flynn, Frank Langella and Alain Delon have all played the hero, but Duncan Regehr is the latest Zorro.

Montalban, Gilbert Roland, Yvonne de Carlo and Anne Archer, was prompted by the box office success of the slapsticky *The Three Musketeers*; the best thing about the movie was its re-use of the rousing Alfred Newman score from the Tyrone Power *Zorro*. Alain Delon got in on the act in *Zorro* (1975), an Italian-French version set in South America.

All the remaining Zorros thus far have been small-screeners. An animated *Zorro* rode for Filmation on Saturday mornings in the late '70s. Stephen J. Cannell's Zorro-esque *The Night Rider*, a failed 1979 attempt to spawn a TV series, starred David Selby as Thomas Earl, aristocrat by day and gallant adventurer by night; Kim Cattrall, George Grizzard, Anna Lee and Pernell Roberts co-starred.

Zorro and Son, a short-lived Disney-produced series, aired on CBS in 1983. At first, the role of the retired, elder Zorro was offered to Disney veteran Guy Williams, though it was ultimately played by Henry Darrow. Paul Regina portrayed the current Zorro.

The Family Channel's half-hour series *Zorro* stars Canadian Duncan Regehr as the strutting popinjay/cloaked highwayman (also seen in the new Marvel Comics adaptation). The 6'5", 215-lb. actor, who played Errol Flynn in the Don Taylor-directed telepic *My Wicked, Wicked Ways* (1985), brings what one reviewer called "a studied dash" to his role. The series is shot on a detailed re-creation of 1840 Los Angeles, which the production company developed on a 34-acre parcel outside of Madrid, Spain. Regehr's father is played, coincidentally, by Henry Darrow (who replaced Efrem Zimbalist Jr. in the role).

But the Robin Hood of the Old West will soon return to bigger screens. Sometime in the next two years, Steven Spielberg will direct a new *Zorro* feature from a script by Nancy Larson for Tri-Star Pictures. Like most modern-day actors who step into classic roles, whomever Spielberg selects to wear the black mask follows in some of the most famous footsteps (and hoofprints) in cinematic history. Steeped in the grand tradition of American folklore, set against the gleaming beauty of rugged scenery and mission architecture along California's El Camino Real, the tales of Zorro have been a favorite subject for moviemaking for nearly 75 years, and the role has attracted some of the medium's top stars. The latest Zorro will need more than just his sword to carve a niche for himself after this rich heritage of screen heroism. CS

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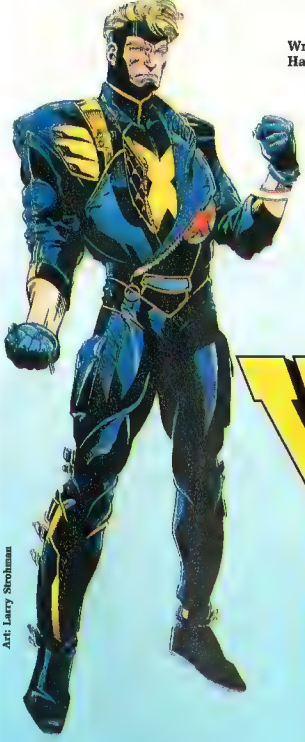


Writer Peter David is ready to unleash Havok on the new *X-Factor*.

Art: Larry Stroman

X WRITER

Peter David tackles new mutants, green monsters & little mermaids.

By MICHAEL McAVENNIE

"When was the last time *you* got into a fistfight?" Peter David asks, although not in a threatening tone, fortunately. The scribe only wants to make his point about the direction he's taking with his new writing chores on *X-Factor*. "Now, when was the last time you got into an *argument* with someone? Arguments and human interaction are things people should be able to relate to much more easily. It's something that happens to them *every* single day, whereas all the running around and hitting is removed from the everyday experience. I think people will be able to get into that [with *X-Factor*].

"I don't want to imply that there's not going to be action," David assures. "There most definitely will be. I'm only stressing *inter*action over action. Things that happen won't just be arbitrary, like, 'OK, we need something to happen, so let's create a new supervillain team to come in and attack X-Factor.' I don't work that way."

David's thinking-man approach towards a government-funded team of mutants may imply that he's something of a pacifist. Keep in mind, however, that he also writes *The Incredible Hulk*, who's considered anything *but* a peace-lover. If this doesn't suggest that there's more under this writer's word processor than meets the eye (or fist), perhaps his step-by-step approach towards getting the monthly writing assignment to Disney's *The Little Mermaid* comic will convince you otherwise.

"I threatened the editors," he laughs. "I saw [Disney editor-in-chief] Len Wein in San Diego last year and asked him if there were any plans to do a *Little Mermaid* comic on a monthly basis. He told me that they were doing an adaptation of the movie, but there were no other plans at that point; on the other hand, he wouldn't rule it out. I asked if anyone had claimed it as a writing assignment. He said no, so I said, 'All right. In that case, if you assign the book, and you get anyone except me to write it, I will *break both your legs*. Len said, 'OK. I'll keep that in mind.'

"Some months later, I get a call from [*Little Mermaid* editor] Dave Seidman at Disney, and he says, 'Len told me that you had expressed interest in writing a *Little Mermaid* comic, should we ever decide to do one.' I said, 'No, what I did was *threaten* Len that I would break both his legs if you got anybody else.' Dave said, 'Oh. Well, we are doing it and I'm editing it.' Then, I replied, 'Well, the same goes for you.' Wisely feeling that retaining his ambulatory prowess was something to his advantage, Dave said, 'OK. Would you like to write it?' I said, 'Sure,' and that's how I got it."

As for his plans for the Disney title, which hits stores in November, David jokes, "Well, Ariel's going to be working for the government, and... Seriously, the decision at Disney was that the comic and the 1992 animated cartoon series would be set *prior* to the movie's events. Their reasoning was that if you have something called *The Little Mermaid*, and it focuses on the adventures of a young, married woman who lives on land and has legs, it's like, 'Where's the mermaid?' It would have been nice to follow up Ariel's adventures with Eric, but I can see why they would want to do it this way, and I really don't have any

trouble with it.

"To a certain extent, the *Little Mermaid* comic is going to be like *The Atlantis Chronicles* [David's 1989 mini-series for DC], except that it will sell well," he laughs. "We introduce other undersea races, go into the personalities of Ariel's six sisters, explore Ariel's recollections of her mother and fill in some background material. We'll also answer the burning question of why Triton's only advisor in the entire kingdom is a small crab [Sebastian], and learn a bit of what Mermaid City's structure is like. At the same time, I'm going to fight to maintain a storybook air about it."

Since the comic is a prequel to the film, the author plans to delve into Ariel's character makeup, including her fascination with those who walk on "whattaya call them—oh, feet."

"The surface land will be of interest to her," he explains. "It won't necessarily be as consuming an interest for her as it was in the movie, simply because you'll have a lot of dead-end stories if you do that. In the very first issue, however, she expresses her interest in the surface-dwellers. It will lead into problems, but it won't be the all-consuming aspect.

"What I am going to play off of is the fact that when Ariel takes an interest in something, she will pursue and explore it; she doesn't care what the rules are, or that her father has set these limits, which is very much the way that she was in the movie. You have the strong feeling that when

Little Mermaid Art: Copyright 1991 The Walt Disney Company
Art: Chuck Austen

***The Little Mermaid*'s comics adventures won't include Eric, but that's OK with David. "He was thick as a brick."**

Art: By & Copyright 1991 Dave Stevens

Novelizing *The Rocketeer* was no problem for the writer; he even added a pre-Superman George Reeves to the story.

Triton was bawling her out about her interest in land [in the movie], it wasn't the first time, and it wasn't just about land. I mean, Ariel didn't become like this overnight. She's a strong-willed young lady, as strong-willed as her father.

"Triton makes it very clear that Ariel is his favorite," the author continues. "I get the strong feeling—and it's something that we're going to be exploring—that the reason Ariel is his favorite is because he sees a great deal of himself in her, and he likes that. I wouldn't be the least bit surprised if his hair was red before it turned white, and indeed, if we ever do show a young Triton, I'm going to make sure that his hair is colored red, just to draw that connection."

Although David plans to develop the characters more fully, he realizes that he can't take them into too much uncharted territory. "The characters dictate to a certain extent what you do and won't do," he says. "I mean, it's *The Little Mermaid*. I'm not going to have Ariel *kill* somebody, because Ariel wouldn't do that. I'm not going to have one of her sisters turn into a nymphomaniac, because it's one of the Little Mermaid's sisters."

He won't write stories that will make Ariel and company fall out of character, but that doesn't mean he can't add a little danger or complexity to their lives. "In a situation where they're about to be eaten by a giant serpent," he explains, "there's some-

Art: Larry Stroman

What's perfect about Guido (right), notes David, is that he's "a character with virtually no background whatsoever."

thing at stake; one of these characters *could* die. Now, you know they're not *going* to, but then again, if I have the Hulk in a life-threatening position, you know I'm not gonna have the Hulk die. Nevertheless, the situation and the jeopardy is just as real, and I'm putting just as much energy, thought and level of entertainment into *The Little Mermaid* as I am into *Hulk* and *X-Factor*."

David also devoted that same level of energy to his other Disney assignment, novelizing *The Rocketeer*, which blasted onto movie screens earlier this summer. Although adapting a movie script limits what input a writer can add, David had "no problems whatsoever" with *The Rocketeer*.

"I know they made poor Al [writer Max Allan] Collins' life a living hell when he did *Dick Tracy*," he says, "but I had no trouble at all, basically because *The Rocketeer* was a different project. Warren Beatty *wasn't* involved, and I think everyone was still a little gun-shy from all the trouble they put poor Al through. So, as a result, the stuff I wrote just sailed through. It's not like I'm a better writer than Al Collins; as a matter of fact, I would probably say that Al's a much better writer than I am. I just happened to be extremely lucky with this one."

The author also felt fortunate about having "a solid script" to work with and not having to delete any of the movie's scenes from the adaptation. That didn't stop him from adding to it, however.

"[Adding] is part of the job when you're novelizing something. If you just sit there and type the line dialogue, followed by a 'He said, she said,' and instead of writing 'Exit,' you put, 'He turned and walked out of the room,' then you're *not* doing your job. Your job is to take the story and make it work as a novel. That means you have to flesh out the thought processes, any holes in the plot—and there are [holes in *The Rocketeer*], but there are holes in *any* movie plot, because movies tell stories through visual shorthand. You can't do that in a novel—not really—because you don't have the visuals. You have the kind of things that you put in—character expansion and exposition, and you try and emphasize the personalities as much as possible.

"I also put in additional scenes, little bits of business that I thought would be tremendously amusing and that were endemic to 1938. For example, there's a sequence in the movie lot, and I have George Reeves there in his role as one of the Tarleton twins from *Gone With the Wind*. Just to add to it, he's sitting there reading a copy of—naturally—*Action Comics* #1, chuckling at the character of Superman and saying, 'Men who can fly. What a *silly* idea!' "

Although a keen sense of humor is obvious throughout most of his work, David still manages to weave a serious yarn with plenty of action. Barring the author's tenure on DC's *Star Trek* comic, nowhere else has that been more apparent than in *The Incredible Hulk*, the Marvel title David took over several years ago and continues writing.

According to the scribe, the reason

"The Hulk's present state of mind is one that's very, *very* unstable," says David.

Art: Dale Keown/Mark Farmer/Colors: Glynis Oliver

behind the Hulk's success has been his more noticeable character development—specifically, his transformations from a dumb green behemoth to a wise-cracking grey brute, and finally, to an intelligent green giant.

"[Character development] is something that all writers do, or at least should be doing," David says. "As you write a continuing character, there should be steady, constant character development. It's just that with the Hulk, it's more noticeable, because his body keeps changing to go with it.

Wolverine may meet his adamantium-armored match in David's story for an upcoming *Marvel Comics Presents*.

Art: Sam Kieth

David enjoys writing Multiple Man's (left) character, "who even people at Marvel have said is just an utter zero."

"Basically, his present form and personality is something I've been working up to for four years. I'm not about to suddenly change it yet. I've metamorphosized the character, whose major strength is his inherent flexibility. Up until now, if the Hulk was changing, it was physically manifested. That's not going to happen anymore, but that doesn't mean that his characterization is now just going to slam to a halt and become static.

"What's going to happen is that the character himself is going to be changing—his perspective, his viewpoints, all those kinds of things, are going to be undergoing constant development. You can get a hint of that [in issue #382], in which I had Delphi looking into her oracle pool and seeing a shot of the Hulk at some undetermined future point having gone completely berserk. So, you get an idea that the Hulk's present state is one that's very, *very* unstable. Even though on the surface, he now seems to have his act entirely together, fans should be realizing that it's *far* from the truth."

While the new, but maybe-not-so-improved, Hulk tries to sort out his totally unbelievable life, David is aiming the series in a direction "very much relating to the real world and the problems encountered in it. It's going to be—dare I say it?—relevant. For example, I'm going to have the

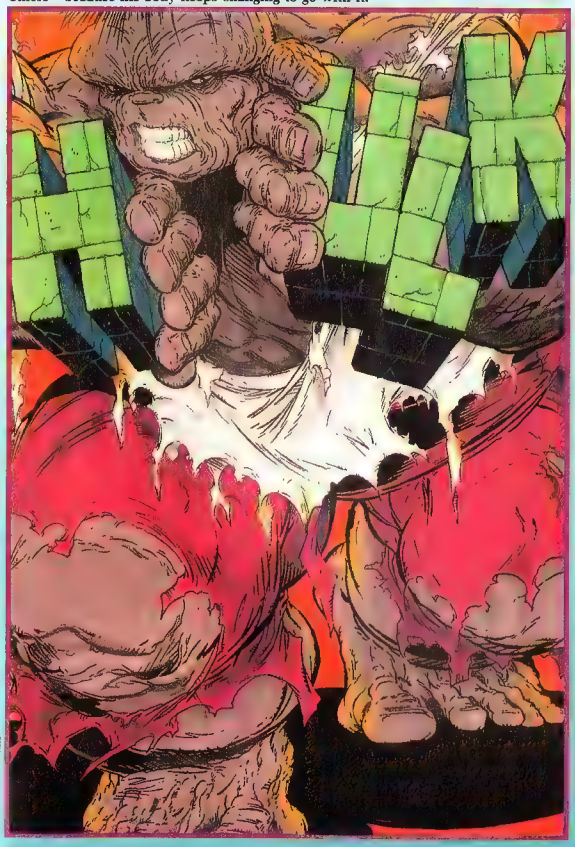
Hulk get involved in a fairly extensive land war against a country that bears more than a passing resemblance to Iraq, and that's going to have tons of guest stars. The Pantheon is going in to overthrow this government. In this instance, however, the place where [this country] differs from Iraq is that the U.S. happens to have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. So, they send in their own forces to go head-to-head with the Pantheon, including SHIELD and the Avengers. It should be good, solid chaos."

The Hulk isn't the only one about to undergo chaos. Marvel has planted a mutant explosion inside comics stores this summer, an explosion that includes the new *X-Force* (CS SPECTACULAR #4, CS#20) and *X-Men* titles, as well as the newly revamped *X-Factor*, which David takes over with #70.

"There are fairly drastic changes [coming in *X-Factor*], in that the tone, style and entire team are going to be different from the way the book has been for the previous 69 or so issues," he says. "We're going to have an entirely different team with an entirely different thrust and purpose behind what they're doing."

According to David, the decision to change *X-Factor*'s look came about as a result of "many editorial discussions and directions and changes, all of which happened before I got on the book. Basically, [editor] Bob Harras asked me, 'Would you be interested in taking on *X-Factor*? This is what the series' basic premise is supposed to be like. This is the team you would be working with. It's not going to be Scott, Jean and [the original X-Men].' The reason for the changes in personnel came as a result of the reshuffling and creation of the new *X-Men* book. So, all of the characters who were ever X-Men are going to be running around in one of the two monthly *X-Men* titles."

David thinks the Hulk's constant character development is more noticeable than others' "because his body keeps changing to go with it."



Art: Larry Strohman

Art: Todd McFarlane

The new X-Factor, drawn by Larry Strohman, consists of Havok, Lorna Dane, Guido, Wolfsbane (formerly of *The New Mutants*), the Multiple Man and Quicksilver. What's interesting about this new team is that since they work for the United States government and have Val Cooper serving as their liaison, they have more in common with the now-defunct Freedom Force (formerly known as the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants) than their predecessors.

"Freedom Force was a good idea with the wrong people," David notes. "The concept behind them was that they were supposed to be an official government arm of mutant experts, which made sense because they were all mutants. Unfortunately, the government chose *villains* to constitute this group, which didn't turn out to be one of their swifter moves. So, at this point, the government has come to realize what any comic fan could have told them if they were asked: If you want to put together a super-group, get *heroes*.

"That's the basis of the new X-Factor. They're going to be 'the official government force of mutants,' as well as a strike force. Just as Delta Force exists when there's a specific terrorist attack, so does X-Factor exist when there's a problem that specifically requires or seems to involve mutants."

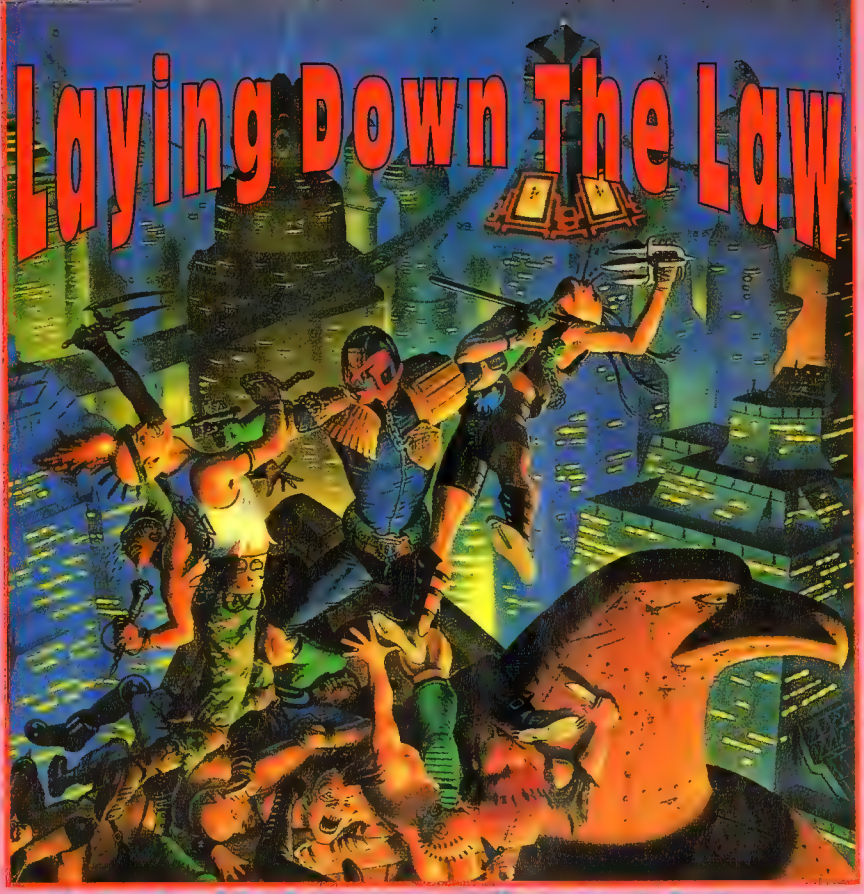
David also explains how the new team's goals differ from the original's. "The original team's public goal was that if you have a problem with mutants, then you're supposed to call in X-Factor to essentially eradicate them for you. If mutants were a problem, [X-Factor] was supposed to be like *Ghostbusters*. But, the thing with X-Factor was broad-based. If a kid next door broke your window with a rock that he didn't touch, call in X-Factor and they'll haul him away. It was like shooting a mosquito with an elephant gun," he laughs.

"The government incarnation of X-Factor is that if there's a problem, then they rise to the situation, the exact same way that the original X-Men did. I mean, the original X-Men were created to battle evil mutants. X-Factor is essentially the same concept, except that instead of living in a private school in Westchester, they work for the government.

"It's not even that [the new team] is part of the government. They *work* for

(continued on page 66)

Laying Down The Law



Art: Steve Fastner & Rich Larson

Judge Dredd takes over an alien jurisdiction on American turf.

By DREW BITTNER

Mega-City One: a sprawling megalopolis of tomorrow that takes up *all* of the Eastern Seaboard. Packed with 800 million citizens and burdened with 80-90% unemployment, crime is rampant and bizarre phenomena are commonplace. To combat the ongoing threat to society that every citizen potentially represents, genetically-engineered Judges are authorized to act as a self-contained legal system, trying and sentencing lawbreakers on the spot. Humorless, merciless and virtually unchecked by higher authority, the Judges *are* the law.

Dredd is the toughest of them all.

And he's coming to America this summer, when Fleetway/Quality Comics re-introduces this British dynamo with *Judge Dredd—The MegaZine*, their first *all*-Dredd title. But unlike what American fans of the Judge have come to expect, *MegaZine* will *not* reprint material from *2000 AD*, the British weekly that kicked off Dredd's career. Instead, *MegaZine* will feature all-new work, written and drawn by a blend of veterans and newcomers, including John Wagner, Alan Grant, Cam Kennedy, Colin MacNeil, Brian Skuter and Jim Baikie

On this side of the Atlantic, sales and marketing chores will be spearheaded by Bob Keenan and Sal Quartuccio of SQ Productions, who previously published *The Art of John Byrne* and a number of portfolios. Their Fleetway/Quality Comics line has reprinted Dredd and other British comics heroes in American form for several years. With the launch of *MegaZine*, they feel the Dredd Invasion is truly underway.

"*MegaZine* #1 came out in Britain back in October and did great," Keenan says. "It's fantastic, because now the creative teams can do even

Art: Jim Baikie

All Judge Dredd Art: Courtesy Fleetway/Quality/SQP

"A future New York *might* need a lawman like Dredd just to keep some sort of order," remarks Keenan.

more than before. They won't have to chop things up into bite-size pieces just to fit in with a dozen other things in one magazine. And the fans won't have to hang on for weeks at a time to see a complete story. I don't know about you, but when I open a book, I want to see a *whole* story, not just six or eight pages! Because it's a big book, *MegaZine* is going to satisfy the hungriest Dredd fan."

Dredd was created by John Wagner for *2000 AD* from a name provided by editor Pat Mills, with cyberpunkish artwork by Carlos Ezquerra. What was meant to be a one-shot tale of weird crime and excessive punishment became an overnight sensation, making Dredd the mainstay of the weekly comics magazine. Fans delighted in Dredd's no-holds-barred methods of law enforcement, much as American fans embraced Batman and the Punisher; here was a character who seemed to make his own rules yet still was a good guy. As Dredd's popularity grew, his world took on greater definition. The Cursed Earth, the radioactive wasteland between the Mega-Cities, and the massive urban areas themselves became vast playgrounds for the writers' and artists' imaginations, allowing them to hurl Dredd into adventures ranging from pure action to science fiction to mystery to horror, always with an edge of social and political satire.

"The Mega-Cities and Cursed Earth have so much diversity, you can tell *any* kind of story there is, any genre," Quartuccio says. "Some of the upcoming *MegaZine* stories will involve Sov Judges, Mega-City Two out on the West Coast, and some will bring back minor characters from past stories. We have 14 years of stuff to draw on and I don't think we've done more than scratch the surface, in terms of storytelling potential."

"With *MegaZine* coming out, the Cursed Earth canvas is open," Keenan says. "Just think that in the last 14 years, we haven't seen much more than Mega-City One. Chopper's graphic novel takes place in Mega-City Two, on the West Coast, and then he ends up in Oz, where he meets the Australian Judges, who are portrayed as Monty Pythonesque, calling each other Bruce and so on.

"That was the exception to the rule before. But now, we can do more things like that, as well as stories like 'Red Razors.' "

The "Red Razors" tale will involve Judges in the Sov-Cities, where the collapse of government has left their society more crime-wracked and anarchic than even the wild and woolly Mega-Cities in America. The Sov-Judges are forced to make criminals into involuntary Judges, wiring their brains and compelling them to enforce the law.

"They're out there in the streets,

Dredd shows off his sensitive side in the first issue of *MegaZine*.

Art: Jim Baikie

All Judge Dredd Characters & Art: Copyright 1990, 1991 Fleetway Publications

doing the Judge thing, and if they get bumped off, hey, it's one less criminal on the streets," Keenan notes. "We think 'Red Razors' will connect with comics readers here and should be a great addition to Dredd's world."

Another up-and-coming character is Armitage of Brit-Cit. "He's a plain-clothes detective who's backed up by a couple of Judges," Keenan explains. "Like most of Dredd's supporting cast, he's a serious character in this bizarre setting. That's what we'll be doing—setting up characters who will explore their locale the way that Dredd has let people see Mega-City One. With things opening up so much, we'll be seeing stories in Africa, Japan, the Lunar colonies...all the places that got mentioned but never explored until now.

"[The creative teams] came up with jewels and just tossed them out. Here in America, we would take those jewels, polish them up and put them in beautiful settings. The British are just starting to realize what they've got in their hands and they're ready now to go back and develop this embarrassment of riches they have.

"Dredd is the *best* character to use for exploring this world, too, because he's so two-dimensional. If you don't know where this guy is coming from in two pages, you're just not getting it," Keenan says. "Anyone can guess what his reaction will be in just about any situation, but getting him into those situations is the fun part. To Dredd, a perp's a perp [perpetrator], whether he's an alien warlord out to enslave the Earth or a kid tossing a candy wrapper on a sidewalk."

Dredd's satiric edge, which has developed a cult following in America, is what Keenan and Quartuccio believe makes the feature great.

"The idea for Dredd came about around the same time the [Margaret] Thatcher government took control in Britain," Keenan explains. "The writers were spoofing what they saw happening, this ultra-conservative new order verging with faintly fascistic overtones, which of course became more overt over the years. They satirized what they saw going on around them, making 'Dredd' into an extreme version of their surroundings. They set the whole thing in America, I think, because none of the writers could *really* picture 'Dredd' happening in England. Aside from their soccer matches, which you have to attend in riot gear, they're really a quieter society than we are. England is the grown-up, with most of their growing pains behind them, while America is the hot-tempered kid with a gun.

Art: Brian Phillips

While Dredd patrols Mega-City One, Armitage does the same in Brit-Cit. "Like most of Dredd's supporting cast, he's a serious character in this bizarre setting," Keenan says.

"New York was their ideal setting for Dredd, because the city is big, loud, violent and has lots of extremes; a future New York *might* need a lawman like Dredd just to keep some sort of order. And partly, I guess they didn't want to set 'Dredd' too close to home because then it wouldn't be parody. They wouldn't be able to stay detached from the setting and the fascistic elements they were writing about."

Some comics readers have felt that British comics, "Dredd" included, are occasionally too highbrow for American audiences. " 'Dredd' too highbrow?" Keenan exclaims. "Not at all! 'Dredd' can be enjoyed on many levels. If you don't like political or social satire, read it for the action, the car chases and gunfights; if you're not into violence, the SF aspects of the Cursed Earth may appeal to you. 'Dredd' has something for everyone."

Quartuccio says the challenge in marketing Dredd in the U.S. isn't

Art: Cliff Robinson

"Once we break the idea that only third-hand reprints are available," comments Sal Quartuccio, "then Judge Dredd's future here is made."

Art John Hicklenton

Notes Bob Keenan, "If you don't know where this guy is coming from in two pages, you're just not getting it."

recognition; it's that they haven't had enough to sell until lately.

"We've been doing this for Fleetway/Quality for about five years," he says. "Fans know who the character is, because we've worked to get T-shirts and posters and buttons on the market, but we've had to shake the belief that there's nothing besides reprints available. That has been the effort, to try and satisfy the demand. And now that we've got *MegaZine* and *Dredd Rules* coming out, we can say, 'Yes! There *is* new Dredd!' "

"The [British] publishers didn't want to release a *Dredd* comic because they thought he would pull sales away from *2000 AD*," Keenan says. "The American way of thinking, that you hit the market with everything the fans want and more, *isn't* how they do things. Fans are screaming, 'More! More!' and the publishers rest easy, knowing they'll sell *2000 AD* on the basis of Dredd's popularity."

"They know that every week, every Tuesday [in Britain], fans will flock to the shops and stands to get the latest weekly, and they didn't want to tamper with that," Quartuccio adds.

"British readers have as much choice as Americans, or more, since their comics shops get the American titles as well as all the European ones, Quartuccio says. "Some of Dredd's popularity comes from his being a home product, created and developed in England, but it's also because readers appreciate the quality of work that goes into 'Dredd.' Once we get Dredd rolling here in the States, with all-new stuff, and break the idea that only third-hand reprints are available, then Judge Dredd's future here is made."

MegaZine won't be the only new Dredd title coming to America; Fleetway is releasing *Dredd Rules*, an all-original book with painted artwork, in the near future. Autumn sees publication of *Judgment on Gotham*, the long-awaited team-up between Batman and Judge Dredd, written by John Wagner and Alan Grant and drawn by Simon Bisley. Keenan and Quartuccio are thrilled to see Mega-City One's top lawman facing the Dark Knight.

"They're opposite faces of law enforcement," Quartuccio says. "It could be a very short story. Batman hops out a window, Dredd tells him to freeze, Batman pulls out gadgets or ducks away on his batline and then gets blown away by a heatseeker. Of course, it *probably* won't happen that way..."

"It's going to be interesting, having a law-fanatic facing a justice-fanatic," Keenan remarks.

If this project goes well, Keenan and Quartuccio believe Fleetway might do additional cross-company

Judge Death tells all as he reveals the "Boyhood of a Superfiend."

Art Peter Doherty

Thanks to a state-supplied operation, "Red Razors" rides rampant, passing judgment on Sov-perps.

stories depending on the cooperation of other publishers.

"I don't think Marvel would *ever* do a Dredd team-up," Quartuccio says. "They don't have to; they don't need the exposure. Their writers parody Dredd, but that's about where it would end. Personally, I would love to see the X-Men land in the Cursed Earth and face Dredd, who would think they're just another bunch of muties. How would they deal with the way mutants are treated [in Dredd's time]? It would be interesting to see, but I doubt it will ever happen. Dredd/Punisher would also be a good team-up."

Art: Steve Yeowell

Art: Colin MacNeil

"Either *Dredd/Predator* or *Dredd/ALIENS* would be a heckuva book," Keenan says. "I would love to see *Dredd/Concrete*, though. Can you imagine a nice, gentle character like Concrete facing a maniac like Dredd?"

In the meantime, Fleetway has several volumes of *Dredd* available in graphic novel and Prestige format, including *The Judge Child Quest*, *Judge Dredd's Crime Files* 1-4 and the four-part *Definitive Edition Series*, reprinting some of the Judge's most famous adventures.

Besides these upcoming comics and special releases, fans can soon expect to see the Judge's scowling, helmeted face on even more T-shirts (a new line has been commissioned by Fleetway), toys and other merchandise. Surge Licensing, which made the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles into a market-dominating toy empire, is grooming Judge Dredd for similar stardom. Like *Turtles*, the toys will be supported by an animated mini-series, which might become an ongoing cartoon show.

"It's tough to picture a faithful Judge Dredd cartoon, but I think they can carry it off," Keenan says. "After all, Dredd never swears [with contemporary profanity], never drinks and doesn't kill *if* he can avoid it, and in cartoons, they can *always* avoid that."

20th Century Fox has also finally announced production of the long-in-the-works *Judge Dredd* movie, possi-

Dredd's philosophy, pure and simple.

Art: Jim Baikie

"Anyone can guess what Dredd's reaction will be in just about any situation," Keenan admits, "but getting him into those situations is the fun part."

Art: Colin MacNeil

bly for 1992 release. With all the new Dredd material on the docket, much of it hitting stands this summer, Keenan and Quartuccio say there's no better time than now for new readers to investigate Judge Dredd.

"Start with *MegaZine* #1," Sal Quartuccio advises. "It has a smorgasbord of Dredd. Readers can dive right in."

"This here train's boarding and set to leave the station," Bob Keenan exclaims. "If you want to get in on the next big thing in comics, climb on now."

That's all, perps. You've been warned. CS

As seen by Benny and a girl named "America," perps aren't the only ones who fear the Judges.

THE WEB™

Impact Comics: Trademark DC Comics Inc. All Web Art: Tom Artis/Bill Wray

"The public perceives the Web as a sort of glowing, metallic juggernaut," says writer Len Strazewski.

Networking agents infiltrate the Impact Universe. They're watching the watchers.

By PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL

Of all the former Archie/MLJ characters to be adapted for DC's new Impact line, the least known *and* the most changed is the Web. Is there nothing left of the original Archie character? "Sure, there is," answers writer Len Strazewski. "The color green."

Actually, the Web isn't even a *single* character. As already seen in its guest appearances in other Impact titles, the Web is actually a government agency, one that has taken on very different roles in each of the other titles.

As part of the "history" developed for the Impact Universe, the Web was created to allow the government to keep track of the 1950s and '60s superheroes who grouped together as the American Crusaders.

"The agency was given a mandate to figure out what these guys were about and also to track their later disappearance," Strazewski explains. "As the Crusaders disappeared, the Web was given a further mandate to create a government superhero, a single character who could do superhero things, but would be essentially functioning under government orders."

That mandate was more difficult to fulfill than anyone figured. "They couldn't really create a single hero, but they did create a single character: To the public eye, there was a hero called the Web—who was, in fact, many agents functioning in a similar looking costume, using similar body armor with a broadcast power technology," Strazewski says. "The American people believe there was a superhero called the Web; they don't know it was an extension of a government agency."

With all the superheroes gone, what purpose could the Web serve? Strazewski says the agency fell into disuse and disrepute. "At the point we pick up the story in the 1990s, the Web has been pretty much a moribund agency for about 15 years or so," he reports. "Since there weren't any superheroes around, they no longer had a mandate. And, of course, budget cuts come and go. So, many of the original agents who played the role of the Web character have been laid off: 'OK—you're on reserve. We'll call you when we need you. Good luck, God bless.' The agency degenerated into a kind of Project Blue Book [the Air Force project

Web Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1993 Archie Comics Productions

"Sometimes the Web agents appear as benevolent forces, sometimes they're nasty, manipulative types," the writer warns.

dedicated to investigating UFO reports]—they got all the junk assignments, like tracking UFOs and looking for Bigfoot, doing all the things that no other government agency wanted.

"They kept a national network of agents—primarily on a freelance retainer basis—but the crux of the so-called super-powered agents, the guys who wore the Web armor, were retired," Strazewski notes. "Some of them would go into action from time to time, but generally they were off doing other things."

Now, super-powered individuals have returned to the world, including the new Shield (see CS SPECTACULAR #4), the Jaguar (see page 57), the Fly and the Comet (both in CS #20). "The government is *very* interested—so they appoint a new director, a young hot-shot, and re-fund the Web," Strazewski says. "The recall goes out to bring in some of the laid-off agents, to recruit new agents and to re-create the Web character and the super-powered agent force.

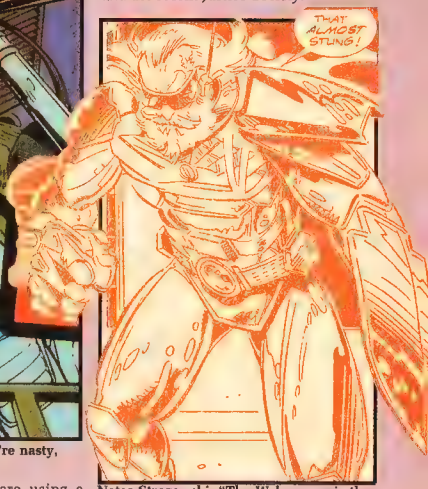
"And again, their mandate is the same as it was 15 to 20 years earlier: Figure out what the hell is going on with these super-people. Are they a threat to America?"

Initially, *The Web* will focus on the recall of the agents and their interaction with newer agents, who are using a more modern technology, Strazewski indicates. "As many of the Impact titles do, we'll be playing with generational conflicts. The younger people will learn from the older, and the older agents learn some things from their conflict with the younger generation. Part of this may lead to the choice of a single person to be the Web character—that may or may not happen, but it's something the Web director thinks might be a good idea.

"We'll see teams of old and new agents confronting a couple of very odd international terrorist villains—a guy named Templar, who's sort of half-man, half-elephant, with huge, thick, leathery skin. He leads a terrorist force made up of what he calls his knights—people with body armor that has been physically grafted to their skin, so it can't be removed without ripping them apart. There's also a female villain called Meridian, who heads a mercenary force. She's of Eurasian origin with a base in the Caribbean."

Not all the Web's antagonists will be human. "The Web has been plagued since the beginning by a concept the agents call 'the Problem,' " Strazewski says. "That's how the agents refer to anything that may be extraterrestrial. Now and again, the Problem manifests itself in one way or another. They don't like to talk about it because they don't understand it. Sometimes the Problem manifests in kind of strange, wacky ways, and sometimes it's very brutal."

As is true of all the Impact titles, the artist on *The Web* has extensive input. *The Web*'s art team is Tom Artis and Bill Wray. Artis is perhaps best known for the mini-series *Tailgunner Jo* and for work on such series as *She-Hulk* and the recent *Justice Society*.



Notes Strazewski, "The Web armor is the focus of the character's powers."

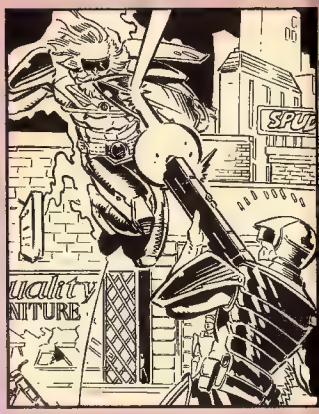
"Tom Artis and I spent a lot of time working on [*The Web*] and the inspiration he produces with his art is just immense," Strazewski admits. "Tom's a brilliant hi-tech designer, and the hi-tech quality of the armor, the Web transport vehicles, the design of the headquarters, is all his work.

"The villains tend to be drawn from the artists' imaginations. Tom created Templar—God knows where he came up with this monstrosity of a human being with leathery skin and fluorescent green eyes, who's 10 feet tall. He eats psychedelics or something, I don't know," Strazewski laughs. "In both the Impact books I write [*The Fly* and *The Web*], it's really a 50-50 deal with the artist—many times, I'm reacting to their inspiration. They are giving me things that stimulate what creativity I have. In many ways, they take the point on stimulating the books' atmosphere and energy."

There's a crowd of people all pretending to be one super-powered hero called the Web. But what does the Web *do*, exactly?

"The Web armor is the focus of the character's powers. It's a hi-tech body armor that was state-of-the-art 15 years

The secrets behind *The Web* are untangled when it's discovered that the hero is actually heroes.



When they're not beating up bad guys, the Web will be keeping tabs on the Impact Universe's superheroes.

ago. It receives broadcast power through a closely guarded government technology never released to the public," Strazewski explains. "It allows an agent wearing the armor to receive a 'boot,' a burst of energy beamed directly to that agent, which charges batteries in the suit and creates what we call the Web effect—a brilliant flash of green light. The charge increases the agent's strength by a factor of about 15 and operates a series of weapons including tractor/pressor beams and other sorts of built-in knick-knacks.

"The public perceives the Web as a sort of glowing metallic juggernaut who strikes quickly and then disappears, because the agents can't hang around and risk having their identity become known. There are always disputes about what the Web looks like in public reports," the writer says, "because he's played by different guys."

If anything is likely to bring the current Impact Universe heroes into a re-creation of the American Crusaders of their past, it's the Web. "The Web goes throughout the line," Strazewski points out. "They have a mandate to investigate superheroes, so Web agents—either super-powered or normal—appear throughout the line. The government has a deep and abiding interest in what the super-powered people are doing. Sometimes the Web agents appear as benevolent forces, sometimes they are nasty, manipulative types. Part of that is because, for years, the Web was so loosely knit, with such loose ties to its freelance agents, that people have developed their own little fiefdoms. You can have a couple of Web agents that have gone rogue in a way and developed an odd attitude toward their mission. In some ways, the Web is a heroic group, and in others, it's an antagonist to the other heroes."

Is this kind of pre-created continuity, this brand new universe likely to be a hit? Is Strazewski pleased to have a part in it?

"Creating a whole new continuity is great. It has been needed for a long time," he replies. "Comics have gotten extremely difficult for new readers to access. To give you a Marvel example: It's virtually impossible for a new comics reader—someone who's 12 or 13 years old—to pick up a copy of the *X-Men* and know what the hell is going on. You have to read two or three years of back issues before you know who all the characters are and what their hangups are. It's very difficult even to pick up a copy of *Superman* and get a feeling for what's happening. You never get the feeling that you can start at the beginning with anything, and that's what I think many readers would really like to see. I think that would get many young readers back into comics and make comics less intimidating. It lets them share in the creation of the world.

"I'm really excited about this," Len Strazewski concludes. "It's a wonderful opportunity to get people to come along for the ride right from the beginning."

William Messner-Loebs insists *The Jaguar* is the "*least* influenced by the traditions of the Archie superheroes."

She's a superheroine (& a mathematician) prowling the Impact Universe.

THE JAGUAR'S TRAIL

All Jaguar Art: David Williams/Jose Marzan Jr.

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON

Comics fans are feeling the impact of *The Jaguar* once again, thanks to writer William Messner-Loebs. This time around, however, the title character isn't the older man that longtime comics readers may be expecting. In fact, Messner-Loebs feels his approach to the character is quite a bit different.

"We were all trying to find a way of talking to, perhaps, the first-time comic book reader," he relates. "Being a female character makes the Jaguar already somewhat unique to comics—there are very few female characters who have their own titles. Also, she's going to college. In junior high school and high school, I was always ferociously curious about what college was all about. College has never been done terrifically well in comics, so starting from that, I tried to make the college a character, meeting all different types of classes and races.

Jaguar (bottom left) joins fellow Impact crusaders the Comet, the Web, the Shield and the Fly.

Shield, Comet, Web, Jaguar & Fly Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1991 Archie Comics Productions Art: Grant Miehm

"I'm also bringing as many different religions as possible into the series," he adds. "That's something else comics have shied away from, mostly because it's very difficult to do. I have ministers, rabbis and born-again Christians as an integral part of the cast."

Making the new Jaguar a young woman was a suggestion from editors Mike Gold and Brian Augustyn, the writer reports. "They were already considering making her a female exchange student from Brazil. Had I thought that was a bad idea, I was free to object and give them an alternative. But I thought it was a pretty good idea, *especially* because the original Jaguar was an archaeologist in his civilian identity. At that time, I had just started writing *Doctor Fate*, another archaeologist in his civilian identity, *and* Indiana Jones, who is *also* an archaeologist! I looked at that, and I thought, 'I'm going to run out of archaeology plotlines!' " Messner-Loebs laughs. "So, I moved her as far away from that field as I could, and made her a theoretical mathematician."

Most of the Impact heroes are in their teens or early 20s; Messner-Loebs explains that until people reach their mid-20s, they tend to identify with older people. "If you make a character in their late teens to mid-20s," he argues, "you're gonna get everybody from eight on up, because everybody's looking up to identify with an adult."

Although *The Jaguar*, like all the other Impact titles, was originally published by Archie Comics, Messner-Loebs claims no elements from the first incarnation are present in this '90s version. "I ran through everything, and there's *nothing* left. He [the original Jaguar] had Animal Man-like powers, very tied in to being an animal; the new Jaguar doesn't. Her perception is that she's an embodiment of the jaguar, in that she's very strong and quick, and can see in the dark and smell well—but so could Doc Savage!" he chuckles. "And *he* wasn't a living embodiment of the jaguar. She's just essentially a hyperhuman, and it's going to take a while to find that out.

"*The Jaguar* is the book that is *least* influenced by the traditions of the Archie superheroes. I read a couple of issues [of the first series], and the whole line suffered from a lack of direction throughout its entire run, *Jaguar* more than most. My favorite Jaguar story is the one where strange and unearthly beasts begin to appear, and he's having trouble tapping into them and battling them. It turns out, oddly enough, that a fraternity from the future decided to go back in time, with all of their alien creatures, and see how the famous 'animal-man' would react. 'Frat Brothers From Beyond Time!' " he laughs.

"Most of the stories tended to be like that, so it was a little hard to get many deep psychological insights. Mostly, the problem was that there are a lot of archaeologists in my present, and I didn't want to deal with that aspect. But the other aspect was that his powers were all pretty much Animal Man powers, and someone else is doing that very well, thank you very much. If they had said, 'Let's do this character over again,' send for Peter Milligan! He knows how to do it. So, the fact that there's nothing left from the original is probably a good thing."

This series begins by recounting the origin of Maria de Guzman, and how she became the title character. "She's having flashbacks to a time when she was 10 years old, and first manifested this power, and repressed it."

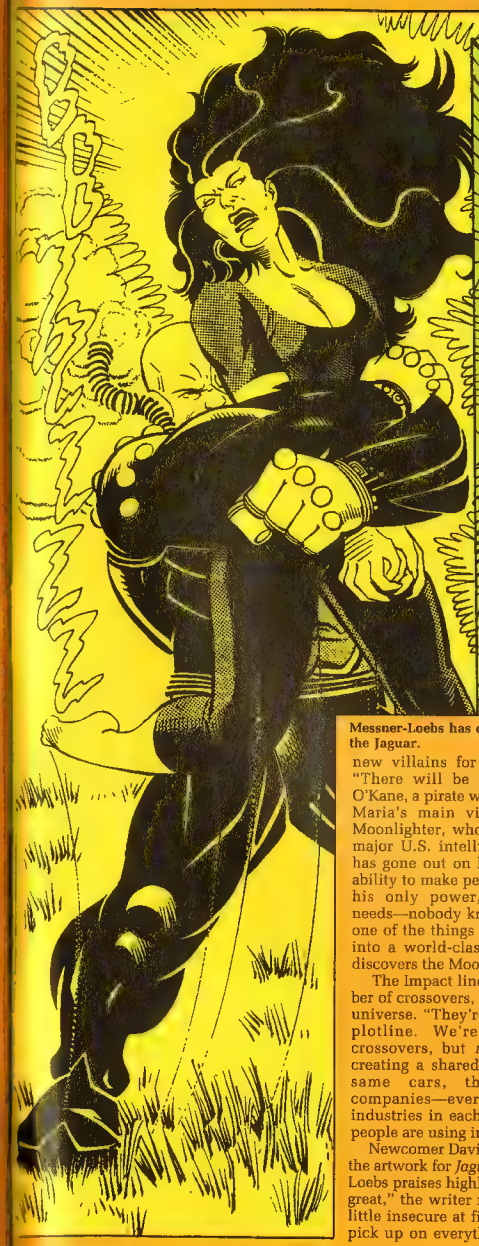
The title kicks off with a three-part adventure. "It will involve a living cyborg created in an underground laboratory below the University," the scribe divulges. "Like many universities, this one accepts Defense Department grants—*unlike* most universities, this one works on things like invisibility serums and black hole research, all the stuff that scientists do in comics, like trying to teach people to breathe fire. The first three issues are an introduction, and will bring in the major cast.

Messner-Loebs has created several

The Jaguar's ready to prowl, but she may wind up as the prey.

Impact Comics: Trademark DC Comics Inc.

Opening issues of *The Jaguar* introduce readers to college exchange student Maria de Guzman and her catty alter-ego.



"She's the embodiment of the jaguar, in that she's very strong and quick and can see in the dark and smell well," Messner-Loebs notes.

Messner-Loebs has created several super-villains who are looking to get a hold of the Jaguar.

new villains for the series as well. "There will be a guy called Mark O'Kane, a pirate with magnetic powers. Maria's main villain is called the Moonlighter, who used to work with major U.S. intelligence agencies and has gone out on his own. He has the ability to make people like him. That's his only power, but that's all he needs—nobody knows that yet. That's one of the things that will turn Jaguar into a world-class player, when she discovers the Moonlighter's secret."

The Impact line will feature a number of crossovers, as well as a cohesive universe. "They're calling it a twined plotline. We're not only doing crossovers, but *mini*-crossovers by creating a shared world that has the same cars, the same asphalt companies—everything. The major industries in each series will be what people are using in the other titles."

Newcomer David Williams provides the artwork for *Jaguar*, which Messner-Loebs praises highly. "The pencils look great," the writer raves. "David was a little insecure at first, but he seems to pick up on everything I say. The collaboration would be much harder if it wasn't for the fact that he is *good*. Since he's good, it doesn't matter that he's only doing it for the first time."

Potential readers shouldn't look upon *The Jaguar* as one of the old Archie superheroes, Messner-Loebs emphasizes. "It's less the fact that it's an old Archie hero, because some readers may not have been born the *last* time it was revived, in the early '80s," he points out. "What they should care about is that we have neat things coming up, all the way across the Impact line. Everyone is very excited about this. We've all invested a lot of time and energy in putting this together, and even though they look fairly conventional right now, I think that as we heat up, none of the books are really what they appear to be—and there are a couple more on the way."

William Messner-Loebs is excited about *The Jaguar* and all of the Impact titles; he asserts that even though the Impact line is published by DC, he views it as an entirely new comic book company—with one big advantage: "It's attached to the DC money spigot!"

AN ANIMATED LIFE

As "101 Dalmatians" bark again, Marc Davis looks back at his Disney days.

By KYLE COUNTS

Walking through the home of Marc Davis, one of the legendary "Nine Old Men" of Disney animation, is like walking through a popular-culture museum. There are shelves upon shelves of books, scores of Disney memorabilia, numerous framed photographs (one shows a close-up of a man's arm with a detailed tattoo of Maleficent, the evil fairy from *Sleeping Beauty*, sent by a fan), various mounted carvings from New Guinea, and a series of original paintings and sketches by the artist. When this visitor remarks that he could spend an entire day just soaking up the rarefied air of Davis' historic collection, the retired animator chuckles appreciatively. He has obviously dealt with fawning interviewers before.

Counting himself "very lucky," Davis still marvels at the studio's place in pop culture. Davis' own contributions are so vast, that they can't be explored in *one* article. Look to COMICS SCENE for more.

Davis, 78, lives with his wife Alice in a suburb of Los Angeles called Silverlake, just blocks away from the original site of the Disney Studios on Hyperion Avenue. He began in animation in December 1935, joining Disney as an apprentice animator on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and winding up his feature film career as directing animator on *101 Dalmatians* (which the studio is re-releasing this month).

He then worked on four New York World's Fair shows, and helped design and create many of the most famous Disney theme park attractions. Nowadays, he travels and works on pet projects such as the two books he's currently assembling—one on New Guinea art, the other a reference work for artists titled *The Anatomy of Motion*.

All Bambi Art: Copyright 1942 The Walt Disney Company

Walt Disney's fondness for Davis' *Bambi* storyboards launched the artist into a career as a full animator.

Asked how it feels to be referred to as one of animation's "Nine Old Men," Davis laughs. "Well, we [Davis, Woolie Reitherman, Les Clark, Ward Kimball, John Lounsbery, Milt Kahl, Frank Thomas, Eric Larson and Ollie Johnston] were called 'The Nine Old Men' when we were still nine *young* men. I guess it means something from the standpoint that I'm getting recognition in a business that has given little real recognition to its talent.

"I remember once hearing Walt say, 'The name Disney represents all of us,' " he chuckles. "He wasn't too great on giving credit to his artists. In fact, until he did *Snow White*, there were *no* credits. Even after that, there were few credits on the short subjects."

Davis ultimately didn't receive screen credit for his work on *Snow White*, nor did his name appear on "Victory Through Air Power," a short the studio made during World War II. "Both Les Clark and I were overlooked—Les for animation, me for story. I was very angry about it because I did some awfully good work on that. I raised hell, said I wouldn't work with any of the top people there. I got an apology from Walt, and of course, I worked with the guys again."

Davis worked on *Bambi* for six years, helping create Flower and Thumper.

And if his name doesn't immediately seem evident in the credits for *Bambi*, it's because he's listed as *Fraser* Davis. Explains the animator, "I used my middle name, Fraser. I had an aunt with the same name, and it meant a great deal for her to see that. I wanted it to read, 'M. Fraser Davis,' but I guess the M got misplaced somewhere."

Born on March 30, 1913, in Bakersfield, California to Harry and Mildred Davis, the animator claims he always had an interest in art: "I think I did my first drawing when I was four years old." Because friendships were difficult to maintain during his formative years—the Davises moved around the country a great deal, making it necessary for young Marc to attend 22 different schools before graduating in 1931 ("My father was a rainbow chaser")—he would keep himself amused by drawing. "I found I could attract attention with my art ability," he says. For one summer between grammar and high school, he attended the Kansas City Art Institute.

When his parents relocated to Los Angeles, Davis signed up for classes at Otis Art Institute (now Otis Parsons). Shortly afterward, he enrolled at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco, only to see the

Depression force him to suspend his studies due to lack of funds. What was a lad to do but head directly to the zoo?

"I would get up early in the morning and catch a streetcar to the zoo. I got acquainted with the assistant director, and he would let me in at 9 a.m., an hour before the public. He would take me around and let me draw anything I wanted to draw. Then, at night, I would go to the public library at Civic Center and look up anatomy books about animals."

When his father died suddenly at age 48, Davis, then 22, was forced to support both himself and his mother by working in a print shop in Maryland, California. Someone in town recommended that he see the new Walt Disney cartoon, "Who Killed Cock Robin?," further urging him to pursue gainful employment at the budding animation studio. Davis remembers being "charmed" by the cartoon. "I had already seen 'The Three Little Pigs' in Sacramento with my father. It cost us two whole quarters, which was a lot of money in those days. I must say I enjoyed it immensely."

Then came the fortuitous two-line ad that Davis saw in the local newspaper in early 1935. The notice was being run across the country by Disney as part of a nationwide search for new talent. The excited young man responded immediately with a letter. The response was, well, unforgettable. "I received a letter back that read, 'Dear *Miss* Davis: We are sorry, but at the present time, we are not hiring any women artists. However, at such time as we do, we will let you know.' I cursed them out and tore up the letter, I was so offended. I hate myself for that—I would give anything to have that letter now.

"I had a few connections in Los Angeles, so I came down and looked around for work. Everyone I talked to said, 'Why don't you go out to Disney? They're hiring artists.' So, finally, I did; I was hired the same day. This was December 2, 1935. I would have been there earlier, had it not been for that crazy letter."

As a beginner at Disney, Davis was required to spend two weeks in a life-

Cruella deVil represents Davis' artistry at its finest. "I enjoyed doing Cruella."

Cruella in *101 Dalmations* was "unlike any other Disney villain," Davis says. "I did every bit of her in the finished film."

All Dalmatians Art: Copyright 1960 The Walt Disney Company

Asked to reveal his favorite piece of animation, Walt Disney once suggested this sequence in which Cinderella (animated by Davis) gets a magical gown from her Fairy Godmother (animated by Milt Kahl)

Cinderella Art Copyright 1949 The Walt Disney Company

drawing class taught by Don Graham. "If you passed that, you went part-time into learning to in-between. They wanted us to learn the techniques of the business. In the evening, you were expected to come in and attend lectures and more art classes. Don Graham had a couple of assistants who taught classes as well.

"I could draw so much better than most of these guys that I was picked to become Grim Natwick's assistant on *Snow White*," Davis goes on to say. "I started at $22.50 a week—and I was one of the higher-paid artists there."

Davis fondly remembers working with Natwick (CS #13). "He was a wonderful man, a very dear guy. He had studied in Europe. He had a lot to offer." Aside from learning the ropes under Natwick's tutelage, Davis was allowed to work on one of the dancing scenes near the end of *Snow White*, a "bonus" awarded to assistants for their hard work. ("It was more like being tossed a bone," Davis quips.) He remembers being caught in the middle of a personality conflict between Natwick and his former assistant Hamilton Luske (who was "kind of in charge of the character") as they battled over Snow White's final look. "Ham," as Davis recalls, favored a "little, round Kewpie-doll" look.

As exciting as it was to be working on the studio's first animated feature, Davis was exposed early on to a healthy dose of skepticism regarding the film's box-office chances. "I remember a neighbor asking me what I did for a living. I told him I worked at Disney and that we were making a feature-length animated film. He said, 'What? A feature-length cartoon? My God, that'll ruin your eyes!' That was the general feeling; people wondered who the hell would want to see Mutt and Jeff or Mickey Mouse for that length of time. But, of course, it didn't turn out that way. It turned out *sensational*."

The success of *Snow White* made it possible for Disney to launch three additional projects almost simultaneously: *Pinocchio*, *Fantasia* and *Bambi*. However, none of them would be completed at the Hyperion location. "We just ran out of room," says Davis. "We started the story for *Bambi* there, then they leased a place for us up in Hollywood on Seward Street. Across the way, there was a place that apparently did porno films; about once every month or so, the police would haul up and bring a bunch of women out dressed in kimonos."

In their *Bambi* book, Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas talk about morale problems that plagued the Seward Street studio crew. ("They made drawings of each other as personnel in the French Foreign Legion, isolated at a desert outpost...Walt never dropped by," the text says), Davis, though, doesn't remember any such restlessness in the year or so they occupied that location.

"I don't think it was all that bad. We had kind of a close-knit group over there: Perce Pearce, Larry Morey, Frank Churchill, John Sullivan, who was managing the whole unit, and James Algar [one of the film's sequence directors]. Walt *did* come by, about three times. I remember Perce had a Christmas party for us over at the Hollywood Athletic Club on Sunset. And if we had to work weekends, we would go up to the mountains. I can't remember a great deal of discontent."

Davis spent a total of six years on *Bambi*, contributing individual characters and story sketches. "Walt found my black-and-white storyboards very exciting. He told Frank [Thomas] and Milt [Kahl], 'I want to see this man's drawings on the screen. Teach this guy how to animate!' That's how I became an animator. I wasn't sure I wanted to *be* one. I had been an apprentice animator on *Snow White*, but Walt wanted me to be a full-fledged animator.

"Every time I would finish a film, I would go up and help develop the next project. I did a lot of story work but got practically no story credits, *ever*. I should have gotten a story

All Davis Photos: Copyright 1993 The Walt Disney Company

For a late 1950s TV show preview of *Sleeping Beauty*, Disney hosted animators Kahl, Davis, Frank Thomas, Wilfred Jackson (right) and Ollie Johnston (seated). In their decades together, Davis saw all sides of Disney's genius and temperament.

credit on *Bambi*, but I didn't; I got a straight animator's credit. I think my contribution was an awful lot more than that. My problem was doing too many things well. I never earned a top animator's salary because I was bouncing around from film to film."

Surprisingly, spending so long a period on one project never frustrated Davis. "This was at a time when there wasn't much work. You couldn't exactly quit and knock on another door. And it was the Depression, people's needs were simple. They didn't need fancy fur coats, diamond rings or Cadillac cars—that was luxury stuff. Ours was about the only business in the world where an artist could work.

"The exciting thing about working at the studio was the people who constantly came through there: Douglas Fairbanks Jr., [famed NY theatrical critic] Alexander Woolcott, [architect] Frank Lloyd Wright...I was at my window one day, and who should walk by all by himself but Albert Einstein. God, that just knocked me over!"

Asked to name his finest hour as a Disney animator, Davis allows that "it's kind of hard to answer that," but goes on to name the antagonist of *101 Dalmatians*, Cruella deVil. "I think you always tend to look at the last thing you've done. I enjoyed doing Cruella, I thought she was a very strong character. If you didn't have Cruella in there, you wouldn't have a story. One of the great lines in that

Peter Pan Art: Copyright 1952 The Walt Disney Company

Davis was responsible for Tinkerbell's final image. He didn't like her at the time, "but look how many people *love* that character."

All Sleeping Beauty Art: Copyright 1958 The Walt Disney Company

"I set up the character of Briar Rose, the princess," Davis notes of *Sleeping Beauty*, "and I designed Maleficent."

film is when she crashes into Jasper and Horace at the end, and she's screaming, 'You imbeciles! You idiots!' And finally, Jasper says, 'Aw, shut up!' "

He singles out no other favorites among his gallery of characters (his creations include Thumper, Flower, Tinkerbell, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and Maleficent), only the pleasure he has derived from "how people react" to them.

"Tinkerbell, I didn't think much of when I was doing her, really, but look how many people *love* that character. So, I've learned to go along with that," Davis concedes. "Because Milt Kahl and I could draw better [than many of the other artists] and, in some instances, animate much better, we got stuck—and I do mean *stuck*—drawing the human characters. But if those are not done beautifully, the film goes to pieces."

For Walt Disney, Davis has high regard. "The man obviously had genius, there's no question about it," the artist affirms. "He could be the warmest, kindest, most gentle person. He could charm the devil. And yet, he could be very aloof, very quick to anger. If you spent a long time with him, as I did, you experienced every one of those things. The last few years of his life, I worked very closely with him, and we got along very well. We were quite close."

Disney was ill at ease with compliments, both giving and receiving them, according to Davis. "If he gave you a pay raise, the biggest mistake you could make was to go to him and thank him for it," Davis muses. "He would just give you that cold look to tell you he was uncomfortable [being thanked]."

However, Disney did have a great sense of humor. "He knew every joke that had ever been written, but he wasn't a big laugher. The one time I saw him really break up was when we went through the elephant pool on the Jungle River ride at Disneyland. Tommy Walker, who was head of entertainment at Disneyland, was there that day dressed in a tweed suit, white shirt and tie, and a pair of rubber boots that went up to his shins.

"Well, the elephant at one end of the pool was designed so that he was pulling on a tree branch. Tommy wanted to point it out, so he stepped off the boat, thinking the water was shallow. He totally disappeared into the water, in that beautiful tweed suit! Walt must have laughed for seven or eight minutes without taking a breath of air. I had never seen him laugh like that before."

Marc Davis has had a magnificent—and Maleficent—life in animation.

Disney's artistic input was never intrusive. "He didn't tell you how to draw something. I don't think he ever said, 'Your character needs a bigger nose,' or anything like that. He either liked your drawings or he didn't. He was like a kid opening Christmas presents. You had to keep them coming. If he started drumming his fingers [imitates Disney drumming his fingers on desk] while you were showing him your work, you knew you had lost him."

He took a more active role in inspiring his story men. "Walt was a great actor, a great story man. He

acted out all the parts himself. You would watch him and wonder how you would do it that well. He had limited talent as an artist, but he made sure to hire people who *could* draw.

"I remember the last time I saw him. It was the last two weeks of his life. I was working at WED (Walt Elias Disney, the precursor to Walt Disney Imagineering), and Walt had just had his lung operation. A group of people had picked him up at the studio and brought him over to the office. He came in, and he said, 'I want to talk to Marc a couple minutes.' So, they left us alone. On the wall, I had the first drawings I had done for the Country Bear Jamboree. He hadn't seen them; he was quite intrigued with them. He laughed. It was probably one of the last times he ever laughed in his life.

"Well, after about 20 minutes, I began running out of Christmas presents to open. With Walt, you couldn't just talk about something, you had to have something to show. Finally, the guys came back in and asked Walt if he wanted to go see the audio-animatronics they were putting together for the Moon ride [Flight to the Moon, now Mission to Mars]. Walt stood up, turned to Dick Irvine, and said, 'I'm tired. Could you take me back to the studio?'

"I stood in the doorway and watched Walt leave. He walked about 20 feet, stopped, turned and said, 'Goodbye, Marc.' That just overwhelmed me." The artist brushes a tear from his eye. "I never saw him alive again."

Davis can scarcely comprehend the contributions he and his co-workers have made to pop culture. "It amazes me that I can go into the jungles of New Guinea and see a little youngster wearing a T-shirt with Donald Duck on it," he marvels. "It's the same with Mickey Mouse. More people know Mickey Mouse as representing America than ever knew the bald eagle. I've felt very lucky that I've been involved in an art form that has given a lot of pleasure to quite a few people. Not too many people can say that."

With *101 Dalmatians* in re-release, Davis says, "It's gratifying to know that a whole new generation is going to see the film. I haven't seen any animated character come along since Cruella that has made me say, 'Gee, I wish *I* had done that.' "

Minor disappointments aside, Marc Davis says he has no regrets. "I always thought I would end up doing something along the lines of the Sistine Chapel, but it's too late—I'm physically not up to it," he laughs. "All in all, I can't complain about the business. It's been good to me." CS

David

(continued from page 47)

the government, the same way that a federal agent does. They're going to have their own lives. It's not like they're going to have these big barracks that they live in, wait for the call and then go charging out of their barracks in their X-Factormobile. They're going to live their own individual lives and have their own places. The X-Factor townhouse will be where they go basically to earn a living. I mean, my basic feeling about this is that it's not just an adventure; it's a *job*."

David isn't quick to reveal what job "assignments" he's giving the new X-Factor. "I will tell you that the book's basic nature is going to be somewhat tongue-in-cheek. I really want to try for a different approach, not quite as out-and-out over the top as *Excalibur* is, but more along the lines of the old *Avengers* TV series.

"The basic primary storyline involves the characters just getting to know each other and their involvement with this newly-created villain of mine, who has the ability to turn people's powers back on themselves. He does that to Quicksilver, which is why Quicksilver winds up turning to X-Factor for help. [The villain] next turns it on Multiple Man, and we see what happens after each encounter. They're already all together as a group, but this one storyline starts pulling them all together as a *team*.

Although the writer wants to pull X-Factor together, he also plans to create some conflict within the group. "I have another storyline planned involving a genetic test for pregnant women. It's along the lines of what they've done in the real world, where they can test to see if your baby's going to have Downs Syndrome or this, that and the other thing. Well, what I came up with is that they've developed a test that will give a likelihood about whether or not your baby's going to be a mutant. This storyline involves women wanting to abort pregnancies because they're concerned that their child might be a mutant, or women wanting to have mutants. So, that should cause a good deal of conflict and argument among X-Factor themselves.

"What I want to do is hit on storylines and topics that cause division between the group, so we can get some really interesting discussion going," David explains. "This is *not* going to be the type of book where there's just page after page after page of fighting. Bob Harras has given me a good deal of leeway in terms of stories with X-Factor. In my first two issues, *nobody* has a fight; there's not a single punch thrown, which I think is slightly unprecedented. I then make up for it with the third issue, in which we have utter mayhem, as about 300 Multiple Men go spilling out into the streets of Washington, D.C., all fighting with each other. So, we make up for it, but we build up to it."

Since the two X-Men books feature most X-fans' favorite heroes, is David worried about having more unfamiliar characters like Guido? "Well, that's what's perfect about him. Here's a character with virtually *no* background whatsoever. That's hardly something a writer should be too upset about. The characters I'm having the most fun writing are the characters about whom we know almost nothing.

"I'm also having a lot of fun with Multiple Man. I mean, here's a character who even people at Marvel have said is just an utter *zero*; no personality, no nothing. So, naturally, he's the one I'm focusing on. I like to do that. I like to take the characters that people feel are just washed up or have nothing to contribute and see what I can do with them."

Although *The Rocketeer* novelization is now out of the way, David's schedule is still a busy one. In addition to his three monthly titles, the author has scripted DC's *Star Trek: The Next Generation—The Modala Imperative* miniseries (which hit stores in July) and the *Next Generation* novel *Q-in-Law* (slated for a September release from Pocket Books). He has also written a Wolverine storyline for an upcoming *Marvel Comics Presents*, featuring art by Sam Kieth. If that *still* weren't enough, David's working with the likes of Steve Ditko, Gene Colan, Kieron Dwyer, James Fry and Jo Duffy on *Creepy*, Harris Publications' six-issue horror book based on the former Warren Publishing title.

With all of these projects under his belt, it is safe to assume that Peter David is stretching himself just a tad thin. "I'm starting to feel a little bit overworked," he admits, "but I don't feel spread particularly thin—not *yet*. For example, there are certain things that I'm doing that are just limited series. In terms of monthly titles, I'm doing only three things that are ongoing, and I can always squeeze in the occasional special project. I'm not really actively looking for another ongoing title, which is not to say that I wouldn't turn one down if it seemed to have real possibilities.

"I just *know* that I'm gonna have X-Factor go up against the Hulk, though," he laughs. "Maybe I'll coordinate my own crossover. Yeah, I'll get in touch with the writer of *The Hulk*." CS

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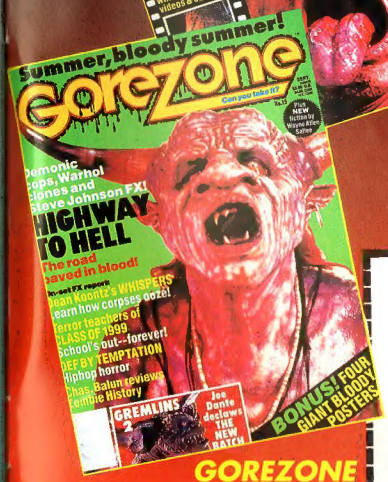

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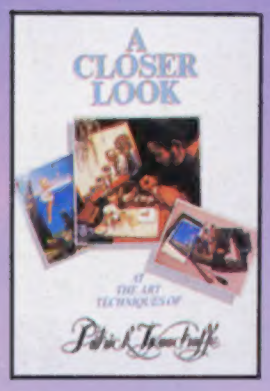

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